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EDITORIAL NOTE

THE problem of the relation of the University to social and national needs is one which at the moment is evoking much discussion, in the course of which that institution has been made the target of strictures — certainly not always without foundation. University reorganisation in respect of studies and functions is thus becoming a sort of watchword with those who profess to desire educational progress. *The Cambridge Journal* springs from a University town, and on this and other issues it might be presumed to represent a particular outlook or policy. This Journal, however, can claim no one point of view, and is not necessarily responsible for the views of its contributors. It is not a specifically Cambridge paper, and belongs to no one school or party. Many contributors — it is assumed and hoped — will belong to certain schools of thought, and it is believed that more will be done for the right cause (and there *is* one, no matter how much we differ) by controversy and the clash of ideas than by laying down any predetermined course of policy. It is often expected of new ventures that a policy, however wide, should be formulated, but that we in no way propose to do. This does not, of course, signify that all or any particular member of the Editorial Board necessarily adopts a 'neutral' attitude to the main intellectual questions of our time. Some may believe that the difficulties of our, and of other, days are resolved through arguments of a theological character; others would resolve them in terms of sociology, economics, science, history or psychology. The author of this editorial has his own fixed and unyielding views on many such issues, but he is, he hopes, sufficient an optimist (in spite of everything) in human nature, and confident enough of his particular view, to leave the field open to free competition — to the issue by trial and error — although on grounds other than those postulated by John Stuart Mill.

'The University in a Changing World' is a topic frequently raised, and the first thought that springs to the mind is 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose'. Education has always been a great stronghold of conservatism and the University is one of its stoutest fortresses. Tradition there has often held a great place — what has been determining what is and what should be. Hence the lack of sympathy on the part of many 'progressives' with the claims of the University hierarchs to order after their own fashion all that concerns the higher education of the people. One change in recent date is quite noteworthy. Formerly the hierarchs were frequently to blame. When they gave expression to their philosophy of education — and it must be admitted that they did not often do so — they

were all too prone to speak in a spirit of esotericism, as if the ends and processes of education were a mystery beyond the powers of ordinary men to comprehend. Hence the often exaggerated emphasis laid on the importance of those branches of study styled 'liberal', as compared with those condemned as 'utilitarian'.

It is easy to understand the plain man's distrust of this aloofness from the practical interests which must always claim so large a share of the attention of the mass of mankind. It is a natural consequence of this aloofness that institutions dominated by it are doomed to play a role in education that is of diminishing importance. At the time of the Renaissance, it was this frame of mind in regard to many of the men of the new culture that made so many of them little better than intellectual fops and bounders. How else could one be judged who could write '*vulgi enim laus apud doctos infamia est*'. From this source, and not from their great medieval originals, the Universities derived a narrow spirit that sometimes made learning the appanage of a coterie, to the great detriment of their possibilities in relation to the well-being of community at large.

Now the wheel has moved around, and we have swung to the other extreme. The differences between the various stages of education tend to be levelled down amid a chorus of popular slogans. Collective thinking often displaces the influence of individual thought, and the technique of science is exclusively accepted as the surest signpost of progress. There is no intention to disparage those who follow courses with practical ends in view, nor to make a fetish out of a so-called 'disinterested pursuit of knowledge'. The old tag, '*Dat Galenus opes, dat Justinianus honores*' exemplifies the strength of practical aims as guiding forces in the work of the Universities. It is the hope of the editors that the contributions to this journal will serve in some way to restore the balance.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PREDICAMENT OF OUR TIME

H. BUTTERFIELD

Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge

OVER thirty years ago, at a moment which we must still regard as one of the turning-points of history, the word 'Serajevo' rang through the world. On the one hand we became vividly aware of those dreams of a Greater Serbia which, with Russia behind them, threatened the very existence of the Habsburg Empire. On the other hand we had to consider the *Drang nach Osten* and the aggressive designs of Germany. Now we can almost say that the wheel has come into full cycle, and though Russia has not gained all that we gave her reason to expect from the defeat of Germany in the first World War — has not gained Constantinople for example — the issue, in so far as she is concerned, seems to fulfil roughly what was our avowed object even at that time. It is not believable that we can have been so short-sighted then as to act in the faith that the Tsardom would continue indefinitely or that Russia would remain for ever inefficient. And, though people are slow to realise when they are happy, it is to be hoped that the present situation of the world will not leave them too restless, for it would be difficult to number in millions of dead what it has cost to make the disposition of forces that now exists.

To those who cry out against the course of things we might say: Was it not foreseen that if Russia attained a position like her present one she would refuse to be 'grouped', especially after learning from our own history-books that this had been our favourite device for nullifying her regional predominance in the nineteenth century? Was it not anticipated that we were producing in favour of Russia a distribution of power in which a government, even if it had been virtuous in previous generations, would become high-handed by an almost inevitable law? Was it not realised that if a power in this position were so virtuous that it sought no more than to retain the advantage it had gained, still other powers would become nervous and draw together, suspicions soon turning to hatred on both sides? And was it really imagined that Russia after her success would *not* look upon Communism as a good thing — a gospel to be imposed here where she cast her shadow, there where she could insert her influence? These points were part of a science which was familiar enough to our forefathers in recent centuries. If we have been under misapprehensions about them the fact will have its place amongst the comments that the future will no doubt make upon the kind of

historiography which has been current in our time, and which has had its influence on public opinion and government.

It might be doubted whether all the powers in 1914 were not asking for something too near to total security for themselves, thereby gravely diminishing that degree of security which they will ever again be able to possess. But though it would be well if we could do away with all nervousness on the moral question — well for our elasticity of mind if we could take the last thirty years or so into a single survey, in a realm in which moral judgments are irrelevant — the future will no doubt confirm our feeling that (as foreign policies go) our conduct has been moral, moderate and well-intentioned; though we may have been fortunate in that this morality coincided with our interests as we saw them; while it may be true in general that if a great power is placed in a certain position in relation to the other powers its conduct will always be (from the point of view of the rest) deplorable. If we note that the violence and aggressiveness of German policy since 1933 can never be denied or excused by anybody we may add that Russia since the Revolution (in so far as one is able to judge the matter without internal knowledge), stands in marked contrast with either of the other two. That country has circuited dangers and come virtually to the top of the world with supreme imagination.

The needs of the state in modern warfare have for centuries been pulling the world in one way, while the liberals and progressives, with their eye only on the more superficial results of their work, have fondly imagined that they were steering it in the opposite direction. The latest wars, even more than any previous ones, have quickened the pace of progress on certain sides; and the speed has been multiplied again because the initial protagonists amongst the great powers in July 1914 — Habsburg, Hohenzollern and Romanov alike — have suffered overthrow amid the most violent modern forms of revolution. In both the Nazi and the Communist systems there has been such a decline of what the liberals and humanists considered to be the essential values in society — combined with so great a concentration on material ends — that over a great deal of Europe the new Dark Ages may be said not to be merely threatening, for indeed they have already begun. And though this need not make us despair for the human race, since the Dark Ages, though they may be long, are by the nature of things an interim affair — a matter of hope as well as gloom if they represent the kind of retreat that may lead to a better start — still, all men must be apprehensive; and if the darkness deepens many will feel that the tragedy is doubled from the very fact that the scientific and industrial era had come so near to making a fine thing in the world. Vast populations have been kept alive which in older days would have been gravely thinned by one kind of disaster and

another. And we have been able to feel that we were establishing a civilisation which was not to be confined to anything like privileged minorities. The machine, however, has so often proved to be beyond the intellects of the men who are trying to control it, and the streak of wilfulness in human nature so often confounds the plans of those who so regularly fail to take account of it, that now, when man's pride in his mastery over things seem to have reached its maximum, we must feel more than ever at the mercy of Providence.

* * *

If civilisation is to be faced with these mechanical breakdowns and these repeated world wars, each more menacing than the previous one, we shall do well at times to reflect upon the things to which we can still hold fast, though the mountains quiver and the clouds are filled with fire; and it would not come amiss if people would ask themselves what are the things that can be carried over when even that structure which we call our 'civilisation' has come crashing down upon our heads; for at worst we shall not all die, and the human race even in its present state of wilfulness can hardly entirely exterminate itself; and it is not permitted to us to despair because the works of men have crumbled, not in our power to judge that this is the appointed end of all things and that (whatever the collapse that we may suffer), human life will never pick up again.

Supposing we are not rushing to ruin — supposing we are to salvage something of the societies and systems that exist in our part of the globe — this will not be due just to our skill or merit at this particular point in the story, but rather to some deep virtues that our forefathers had when over long periods they constructed certain things on an enduring basis, so that these should survive even when the pillars of the earth were breaking. But in any case we are confronted with cataclysm, though we may be hoping to escape it still — confronted with the problem of what we may be able to save in the midst of cataclysm. We had better look more closely at the shape of this thing called destiny than seemed possible for our Edwardian predecessors, complacently erecting their structures on the illusion of security in an ever-improving world. It is not those who see only the present and work for immediate returns — it is not the politicians — who will show the way of salvation in an age which is heavy with the greatest catastrophes. Nor will those who curse their fate be useful guides for us, if, in our case too, there is to be something like the return of the Dark Ages. We are in the presence of a great piece of history-making and we do not any of us know where it is taking us. This universe always was a risky place to live in, and only the arrogant and foolish ever doubted that at its last end all human constructions would be turned into wreckage. Short of this, if there is to be an intermediate human disaster — something

like another downfall of the Roman Empire in the West — these are days in which one would choose to live in order to learn something more profound concerning human destiny, and to see with a clearer eye the ways of Providence.

* * *

When I am engaged upon a geometrical problem or set myself to study the parts of an intricate machine, there is no reason why my mind should not try to be clear of all affections. And though if I turn to politics my affections may be involved, especially when the problem at issue demands a choice between more or less desirable ends, yet when it is a question only of adapting means to ends, or when I am seeking to discover the limits of what is practicable, it would be well if my mind could freeze into something as hard as steel and as cold as ice. When I am thinking about man's nature and destiny, however, his place in the scheme of time, the posture he should adopt in the universe, and the ends that ought to be his in life, I cannot disentangle myself from my affections. My efforts must be directed to seeing that these are rightly placed.

Even if I am initially asking myself whether I can believe in God, then, though my wishes must never be father to the thought, it would matter if I came with so to speak half a grudge against the universe, or in those high spirits in which men count themselves like gods and kings of the earth. In any case the primary movement that we make is not a verdict on the world in general, not a judgment about the cosmos or an inference from astronomical calculations and systems; it is an assertion that we put forward about the human intellect, whether we worship it as a perfect good and as comprising all the royalty of Mind itself, or we put a check on this fervour, remembering that our intellect may refine itself to one of its sharpest points only in order to produce the atomic bomb. Or, rather, we make not an assertion about anything, but a decision about ourselves — we decree from what angle we will meet the whole stream of events and what shall be our posture as human beings under the sun.

Now, if one were to see this civilisation tottering and were to ask upon which of the sins of the world the judgment of God had come in such a signal manner, it would be difficult not to specify as the most general of existing evils, the one most terrifying in its results — and at the same time the one to which our constitutions are most prone — human presumption and particularly intellectual arrogance. There would seem to be reason for believing that none of the fields of specialised knowledge is exempt from this fault, which has a way of sliding imperceptibly into their constitution. There is no miracle in the structure of the universe that should make us think that even archbishops are free of it; and it is liable to be the besetting disease of the historian. The effect of an historical education may easily

lead to its encouragement in the young, as the mind sweeps over centuries and continents, churches and cities, Shakespeares and Aristotles, curtly putting everything and everybody into their places. This is more serious in that from the defect of other sides of our education in these days it would appear to be from abridged history and bookish political ideas that people are acquiring many of their notions about human life in time and the place which their nation ought to have in the sun. So far as contemporary affairs are concerned, we can find a scapegoat in the event of any plan miscarrying; and every single man in the universe can say that all would have been well if the rest of the world had only agreed to follow his way. Therefore we can close our eyes to the fact that there are problems which the intellect has not yet solved.

* * *

I am not aware of anything in the processes of nature or of history which would justify us in imagining that (on the short-term views which we must take on such a question), the wicked are unlikely to prosper in the world. It is clear that even in Old Testament days men were troubled because Heaven allowed the unrighteous to flourish so greatly — God fumbled, apparently, and the wicked prevailed. Indeed, though it is our obligation to rectify those evils which it is in our power to remedy, we too much despise the ancient injunction not to be too fretful because of evil-doers; when the truth is that if we take too much on our hands and try to control the righteousness of all men, we may end by only doubling the area of the mischief. Yet there is one crime — not merely a mistake but a sin, for it is the climax of human presumption — which seems doomed sooner or later always to meet a terrible retribution within the historical realm itself. In this respect the wilfulness of arrogant men is sure to find a punishment and a correction that seem to be concealed in the very process of things. For nothing has been visited with such unspeakable consequences in our day as the pride of those who presume to fly in the face of history and set themselves up against Providence itself. On this point it would appear that the anger of Heaven is so violent that it cannot wait until the Judgment Day.

We are flying in the face of Providence if we even demand too great security for the future — demand that hundred per cent certainty in all contingencies which some of the Germans apparently imagined that it was a grievance for their country not to possess. We are over-arrogant if we too ruthlessly sacrifice a present generation on the presumption that a future one will want to complete our purposes, so that, as in the case of certain kinds of revolution, the living are made to suffer for a benefit too remote and highly contingent. It was the fault of the Germans in two wars that they repeatedly gambled everything on a colossal system of policy which, if it

had been a hundred per cent successful, would have been brilliant in its results, but which challenged time and circumstance too boldly in that if it only ninety per cent succeeded — or even ninety-nine apparently sometimes — it utterly failed. All in fact was dependent on the ability to calculate all possible contingencies and absolutely hit the bull's-eye; and if the object were missed, if it were only nearly achieved, this was irretrievable tragedy, since everything was then worse than before. This is too great a challenge to offer to high Heaven and it has the weakness of the academic or professorial mind which sometimes erects policy into colossal systems, carefully culminated and accurately dove-tailed — all without sufficient allowance for the unpredictable things that happen, and all liable to be ruined if a single link in the chain proves unexpectedly weak. The English have often 'muddled through' with a system which, if it was sixty per cent successful, at least gave a sixty per cent return. And by a certain elasticity they have sometimes gained further advantage from the unexpected ways in which time and chance itself will occasionally throw in a helping hand. In this connection we may note that it might indeed be necessary to destroy an enemy like Germany in order to save oneself by a hairsbreadth from immediate overthrow. But our forefathers were right when they held the maxim that for those who seek to preserve civilised society the actual destruction of a power cannot itself be a legitimate political end, since it is not a thing of which we can control the consequences. In other words, it is too great a rebellion against the order of Providence.

* * *

If the darkness of the new Dark Ages deepens it may not be irrelevant to note that it is not possible to see how, humanly speaking, the Church, as one of the institutions in the world, could play the remarkable role which it was performing a thousand years and more ago. The downfall of the Roman Empire in the West had reduced many of the ancient secular authorities, while leaving the ecclesiastical ones in a particularly strong position. The Papacy not only survived the catastrophe but reaped great advantage from it, for example by the removal of its chief competitor, the imperial authority which had stood close at its side. For the barbarian peoples who over-ran western Europe at this time, conversion to Christianity was often almost the introduction to civilisation. That conversion was not difficult to achieve, apparently, after the monarch and some of the leading people had been won over. It was so much the work of men who regarded themselves as the agents of the Pope that it amounted to bringing one region after another into the orbit of Rome; and to be a Christian was to be a Catholic in communion with Rome — part of what in western Europe was a single undivided Church; for the Arian heresy soon died out and there was virtually no clamour

of competing sects. The Church under these conditions had the leadership of western Europe so to speak thrown into its lap; and, since there were semi-barbarian peoples to educate, it held the strategic position in the recovery and transmission of the legacy of Greece and Rome. The fight against illiteracy, the provision of competent administrators, the development of schools and universities, the cultivation of the arts, the promotion of legal studies and political theory — all these were the work of the clergy for special reasons. It is difficult to measure the permanent effects of the connection between Christianity and this early stage in the development of our civilisation. It was this which induced Lord Acton to call attention to the blessings which Europe owed to the Dark Ages.

It is hardly thinkable that in the twentieth century the agents of Christianity should find themselves endowed again with these particular opportunities for universal leadership; or that in days when printing has so multiplied the repositories of knowledge there should be anything like that cultural hiatus — that interim loss of the very records of earlier intellectual history — which only the organs of the Church could begin to rectify. The fall of the Roman Empire brought in the long run the decline of towns, and it would have to be an almost unimaginable catastrophe that could now prevent our civilisation from being an affair of towns and cities; for it would seem that the agglomerations will remain though herds of human creatures have to live congested only in the ruins of them. And perhaps it was the urban development in society most of all which was responsible for the rise of a lay spirit, for the modern secularisation of life, and for the overthrow of the power which priests had once possessed.

A grand cataclysm may drive people to think more deeply upon their destiny and upon the question of what they are to make of their lives on this earth; and such a reflection, it is true, may persuade them to consider more closely the claims of Christianity. But cataclysm apparently may have merely a numbing effect, especially on men internally bankrupt — men who have seen the fall of all that they believed in — as post-war Germany might seem to show. And the barbarians of the new Dark Ages will not be the illiterates whom the Church found so amenable to leadership a thousand years ago; but the half-educated who, since it is their temptation to be stiff-necked, are the real destroyers of civilisations.

* * *

In our exhilaration for the things which hum and revolve — an exhilaration not less blind sometimes than that of a Nazi airman in his machine in 1940, nor less forgetful than his zest in the feverish pace of war itself — we may too easily lose some of the wisdom which stores up so much of the whole experience of mankind, surveying it from higher altitudes, and turning it into long-term reflection. It

may even be too late to point out now how the advantages of a technological civilization were originally assumed to be things which could be added to the virtues of the humanist one, instead of being turned into a system of their own which should become all-devouring. And since education itself has lost so many of the safeguards against this danger, we may wonder by what fits of absence of mind, or what anaemia of the 'elder statesmen' of education, so many passes have been sold.

For centuries there has been a conflict between the men who desired an education in 'things' (as they said), and an older teaching-system which it was customary to condemn as being an education merely in 'words'. And who can doubt that the teachers of the 'humanities' have themselves been to blame sometimes for the defeats that they have suffered? For they have admitted the traditional charge, and too often — as though the academic mind had become desiccated — they have forgotten their *raison d'être*, justifying the reproach of their enemies because they were so ready to fall into routine, or to put books in the place of life, or to be content with philology, aesthetic appreciation and *belles lettres*. The strength of the old education lay in the fact that it comprised a study of the 'humanities' in a more authentic sense of the word — it entailed considerable meditation about humanity, much discussion of what happens inside human beings, much thought about human relations and some reflection on the vicissitudes of man under the sun. In other words it involved moral education; and though we may not wish to create the kind of 'gentleman' which Renaissance teachers seem to have had in mind, still, *mutatis mutandis*, those who sway the world must always be trained in the knowledge of human values and the rules of civilised intercourse; for it is the greatest of mistakes to imagine that these are things which grow in the woods without any cultivation.

The case is more clear, perhaps, if we consider its converse; and here we may note that the evils of Nazi Germany were most disturbing and menacing not in those features which might have been peculiar to Hitler or to the Teutonic mind, but those which are liable to occur in other lands and systems, those moreover which some men were predicting, without any thought of Germany, in the nineteenth century. The paradox lies in the fact that the most superficial views of human personality, the most barbarous world of human relationships, the most paltry conceptions of human nature and human purpose, and the tendency to most wilful blind reactions in the face of opposition or mere differences of opinion, can co-exist, as apparently they did in the case of the Mongols, with marvellous powers of organisation and an astonishing degree of technical ingenuity; all this in minds which have not the slightest inclination to withdraw into themselves for a moment in order to question their self-righteous-

ness. And though we might dismiss the matter by saying that the Germans are more wicked than the rest of human nature, we should in such a case be falling into the same wilfulness of blind reaction ourselves; for time has its revenge on such fallacies and, if we slip into this one, we can be sure that sooner or later some other nation in its turn will come to appear sub-human to us — there is no neater way of missing the profundity of the issue. Criminals there may be, but in the case of Nazi Germany, for example, we can only reach daylight by treating the problem as that of a decline in civilisation; it is the modern pattern of 'barbarism'.

There are always difficulties to be faced when classes long disinherited are suddenly brought to power — men who may have had no opportunity to learn the more subtle values and the more long-term maxims of an advanced civilisation. The whole issue is one to which we ought to consider the humanist side of education as being particularly addressed. Only a training in humanism and an acquired habit of sympathetic reflection on human beings viewed internally can readjust the balance in a world where scientific ingenuity is so outrunning the rest of human development.

Even so, this problem of the disinherited has come to confront us in the twentieth century in a particularly aggravated form. Who can doubt — looking at Nazi Germany in the last decade or at Europe today — that it was the first World War and its aftermath which began the process of barbarisation, and introduced the new Dark Ages? The whole problem exists, therefore, irrespective of the atomic bomb and is altogether anterior to it.

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The Churches apparently are going to lack the adventitious weapons and alliances which they possessed a thousand years ago. At the same time the whole cause of 'humanistic' education, which once held the strategic position, has long been under pressure from a world which tends to regard it as a luxury. State-systems which represent vast agglomerations of technological power confront one another with less capacity for human understanding — and less foothold for it between them — than was the case during many centuries in the history of Christendom. And we who face the future so confident that it will praise our good intentions and moral rectitude in the last thirty years or so, may still find ourselves pitied by posterity for our lack of imagination. Finally a civilisation long reproached for its excessive drift into materialism is now going to be condemned by Providence and the very nature of things to a frenzied concentration upon material ends. It will need the recognition and the eliciting of vast spiritual resources in human beings to prevent the modern forms of self-righteous unimaginative barbarism from creating further havoc.

RUSKIN AND ROGER FRY: TWO AESTHETIC THEORIES

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Il y a des gens qui s'émerveillent devant l'ordre miraculeux régissant la nature, qui s'étonnent de la beauté qu'on peut y éprouver. Je dois dire: c'est au fond ces gens-là qui m'étonnent. Serions-nous d'un autre monde, posséderions-nous une âme non terrestre, il y aurait lieu de s'étonner de ce que nous comprenions quoi que ce soit des choses de ce monde. Mais puisque nous sommes de cet univers, puisque nous faisons partie de ses contingences, il est absolument naturel que notre entendement s'entend avec le reste de cet univers; et le mot de naturel prend ici son entière valeur.

Axel Stern.

It is characteristic of the early part of this century that the most significant movements in the arts were separatist movements. The current was setting strongly towards a literary man's literature, consciously concerned with vocabulary and rhythm; an artist's art, concerned with purely formal values. We can see its English origins in Whistler's Ten O'Clock lecture and the literary attitudes of the 'nineties. Later, we have the appearance of significant form and the pure aesthetic emotion; it becomes a gaffe, not a metaphor, to talk of poetry with the Platonic and Shelleyan sense of imaginative expression in general; poetry is what is written in verse, and its function is to amuse decent people, not to legislate unacknowledged for the world; and we begin to look at the novel as no ordinary novel-reader had ever looked upon it, from the point of view of structure or of texture. Parenthetically, we may note the preoccupation of philosophy with verbal and logical analysis. As far as the arts are concerned there are diverse expressions of this tendency. Sometimes it takes the form of a rather arty irresponsibility, sometimes of a demand for order and due subordination. But the moves are all actually in the same direction — they are all part of a movement towards disintegration. They either put the arts into a cloud-cuckoo-land, from which the ordinary preoccupations of mankind are excluded; or into a pigeon-hole where there is no danger of their spilling over into religion, or contaminating ethics. Whatever they may say they are, these are both operations against a unified sensibility. A flower cut and put in water is easier to look at than when it is on the tree, but it has no longer any organic connection with the processes of nature; there is more order and subordination in a

regiment than in a family, but there is less organic unity. The main social effect of this movement has been a gradual divorce between the original artist and the public; its literary aspect has been discussed by Edmund Wilson as a wide extension of Symbolism. By now many of its productions have added a permanent enrichment to our experience but are no longer, perhaps, immediately active. Historically speaking, the most obvious thing is that this was all necessary. It was necessary to stop the short-circuiting of the special functions of the arts by a premature recourse to ethical and social considerations. Poetry may be a criticism of life, but it is other things first. In the visual arts especially, and in England above all, this isolation and purgation was needed. In mid-Victorian England the visual sensibilities had reached their lowest ebb, and had left on the foreshore a miscellaneous collection of *objets d'art*, whose most striking characteristic is that they can hardly even have been intended to be looked at. One is reminded of Roger Fry's railway-station restaurant.

If I were to go on to tell of the legs of the tables, of the electric-light fittings, of the chairs into the wooden seats of which some tremendous mechanical force has deeply impressed a large distorted anthemion — if I were to tell of all these things, my reader and I might both begin to realise with painful acuteness something of the horrible toil involved in all this display. Display is indeed the end and explanation of it all. Not one of these things has been made because the maker enjoyed the making; not one has been bought because its contemplation would give anyone pleasure, but solely because each of these things is accepted as a symbol of a particular social status.

This was written in 1912: the curious thing about it is that it might have been written forty years earlier, by Ruskin or William Morris. The attempt to educate the visual sensibilities that it implies was begun in *Modern Painters* in 1849. Since then it has been more or less continuous: Ruskin and Roger Fry were both engaged on the same enterprise; but their different climates of opinion led them along steadily divergent roads. Perhaps it is because there has been so little English art-criticism that what there is so expressive of the age in which it was composed. Reynolds, Ruskin and Roger Fry might very well stand as representatives of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But Reynolds's *Discourses* are after all the expression of a school doctrine; he is training students in an already established tradition. Ruskin and Roger Fry were more independent: 'cussedness' is the word Fry uses about himself, and it would do for Ruskin too: and this pertinacious cussedness enabled

them not only to express, but to mould the sensibilities of their times. Both were concerned with the education of the visual sense, concerned to make people experience visual satisfactions that they would never have discovered for themselves; and in this respect both have had a large measure of success. Botticelli's angels would not now hang on thousands of English walls if it had not been for Ruskin; nor Van Gogh's sunflowers if it had not been for Roger Fry. Both men, too, were deeply concerned with the relation of aesthetic experience to the rest of life; and here they are in a field where success or failure is more difficult to determine: they reached very different conclusions and each at any rate found one that was highly significant to his own age. This is a not uninteresting bit of cultural history, but it is also something more. The question of how aesthetic experience is related to the rest of life must concern anyone who cares about the arts; indeed it must concern anyone who tries to look at the rest of life at all comprehensively. The works of Ruskin and Roger Fry provide two typical answers to this question, and in this light, each assumes a symbolic importance beyond himself. To both aesthetic experience was a necessity: Ruskin represents all those to whom it is so necessary that it must be related to all his other deep experiences, religious and ethical: Roger Fry represents those to whom it is so necessary that it must be kept in isolation, pure and unspotted from the world.

Collingwood has suggested that the underlying principle from which all Ruskin's practical thinking springs is the unity and indivisibility of the human spirit, and that this involves a comprehensive belief about the mind, 'the belief, namely, that each form of human activity springs not from a special faculty — an organ of the mind, so to speak — but from the whole nature of the person concerned; so that art is not the product of a special part of the mind called the "aesthetic faculty", nor morality the product of a special "moral faculty", but each alike is the expression of the whole self'. This is of course the result of a philosopher's analysis; Ruskin nowhere says this in so many words. The underlying conviction of unity in any case is liable to find expression in a number of different forms; when it is only half-consciously realised it is apt to be expressed in a series of fragmentary identifications between things usually considered diverse; 'the strongest part of our religion is its unconscious poetry'; 'all art aspires to the condition of music'; 'life is a ritual'; there are a good many of these statements in the air of the later nineteenth century. The particular content of the statement will depend on the particular interests of its author. Ruskin's particular interests being in art, his aim is to show that art is the expression of man's nature as a whole, and cannot be justified by a partial appeal such as that to utility or a special aesthetic sense. As

the arts with which he is concerned depend on visual sensibility, it is his business first to show the connection of visual sensibility with the rest of the psychic life.

Ruskin's work is not quite so much of a muddle as is sometimes supposed. The first two volumes of *Modern Painters* attempt a more or less philosophical exposition of his theory; and *The Seven Lamps* and *The Stones of Venice* show it in operation. He starts from the belief that the uneducated senses do not really see what is around them, that it is only after an arduous course of training that we can really be said to see at all. He makes a rather unhappy attempt to connect this with Locke's distinction between sensation and perception; but Locke is distinguishing between the physical fact and its psychic result, Ruskin between attentive and inattentive perception. Actually Locke does not suit his purpose at all well, and he would have been happier with the German idealists, of whom he apparently knew little. By the time he comes to the main exposition of his view, the section of *Modern Painters* on the Theoretic Faculty, he has forgotten all about Locke and taken up with Aristotle, if anyone. He has already, by introspection, come to the conclusion that 'bodily sensibility to colour and form is intimately connected with that higher sensibility which we revere as one of the chief attributes of all noble minds, and as the chief spring of real poetry'. He now decides that the exercise of this sensibility, the intense contemplation of sense impressions, can be identified with the Greek *Theoria*.

The Theoretic faculty is concerned with the moral perception and appreciation of ideas of beauty. And the error respecting it is, the considering and calling it Aesthetic, degrading it to a mere operation of sense, or perhaps worse, of custom.

Here Ruskin is making, I believe, essentially the same distinction as Roger Fry makes in his early *Essay in Aesthetics* between the apprehension of beauty as sensuous charm and the apprehension of beauty as a satisfying emotional order. 'Beauty in the former sense belongs to works of art where only the perceptual aspect of the imaginative life is exercised, beauty in the second sense becomes as it were supersensual, and is concerned with the appropriateness and intensity of the emotions aroused.' But Ruskin's statement would include the works of nature as well as works of art; and he uses the key word 'moral' to which we will return in a moment.

He next proceeds to argue that *Theoria* is produced by the systematic training of the senses, and gives an illustration from the sense of taste. When we first experience two different tastes our preference between them seems entirely outside our control. But by repeated experience and careful attention to the same two tastes we

come to perceive qualities in both at first unnoticed: as a result we may ultimately reach a settled preference different from the first, which is yet regarded by ourselves, and accepted by others, as more correct. As an account of the way in which most people who have had the opportunity ultimately come to prefer Stilton to Australian cheddar, this seems adequate. But from the nutritive point of view there is nothing to choose between them; the faculty which discriminates between these two cheeses performs no biological function. Ruskin proceeds, then, to distinguish between the purely instrumental uses of the senses and those which are ends in themselves. The lower senses of touch and taste are mainly instrumental, mainly subservient to the purposes of life; though Ruskin believes, as Dr. Summerskill does not, that even they can to a limited degree become ends in themselves without detriment to the total organisation of our nature. But sight and hearing are manifestly more than instrumental.

They answer not any purpose of mere existence; for the distinction of all that is useful or dangerous to us might be made, and often is made, by the eye, without its receiving the slightest pleasure of sight. We might have learned to distinguish fruits and grains from flowers, without having any superior pleasure in the aspect of the latter; and the ear might have learned to distinguish the sounds that communicate ideas, or to receive intimations of elemental danger, without perceiving either melody in the voice, or majesty in the thunder. And as these pleasures have no function to perform, so there is no limit to their continuance in the accomplishment of their end, for they are an end in themselves, and so may be perpetual with all of us; being in no way destructive, but rather increasing in exquisiteness by repetition.

But when we experience the pleasures of sense we also experience in them a feeling of purpose and adaptation to our desires. The pleasures of sense are not scattered and chance-distributed, but form part of an order which training and practice enable us to perceive. We become conscious, not only of isolated pleasing forms, but of a whole formal order in nature. The experience of this formal order is accompanied by an intense sense of the Power that has given rise to it. Like the natural theologians of the eighteenth century Ruskin finds that the study of the order of Nature leads to God; though he studies it under a different aspect, and it is revealed to him in beauty of design rather than in practical adaptation. Art is one mode of the study and exhibition of that order. Ruskin does not distinguish clearly between aesthetic satisfaction received from Nature and that received from art. Both are perceptions of a formal order, and the

order is in both cases designed and purposive. Nature he regards as the direct agent of a personal God, and he often speaks as though Nature were a conscious artist, aiming deliberately at beauty of form. The human artist abstracts and reproduces fragments of the design he has perceived in nature. He may employ any degree of abstraction in doing so, but however far he departs from representational accidents, it is still from the perception of a formal order in nature that his work has started. Out of which perception, Ruskin says, still speaking theistically, arise joy, admiration and gratitude. (But those who are not theists would equally admit that some emotions of this kind are the inseparable accompaniments of the perception of formal order in nature, or the exhibition of it in art.) Thus we cannot go far in the cultivation of the senses without going beyond the purely sensual. Aesthesis, or the 'mere animal consciousness of the pleasantness', passes into Theoria, or 'the exulting, reverent and grateful perception of it'. And this perception Ruskin calls moral.

It is perhaps easier to say what Ruskin does not mean by this than what he does. He does not mean, for example, that the value of a work of art corresponds to the moral value of the emotions expressed: nor is he using the word moral in any private sense of his own: he is using it in the quite common sense of 'pertaining to character and conduct'. He means in the first place that the perception of beauty or formal order is not isolated from the rest of life; secondly, that it is not an affair of the intellect, or purely of the senses, but of the moral life in the widest sense, the life of the emotions and the will. He does not mean, either, that the artist uses a sense of form to reproduce the previously existent emotions of actual life, love, sympathy, terror and what not, inspired by other than formal occurrences. The emotion from which the work of art springs is derived directly from the perception of formal order. But these emotions are a part of the general emotional life. The feelings aroused in us by space, by masses at rest, by unity and variety of form, are in fact the emotions of ordinary life, not a special category of their own. All sensitive natures experience these emotions on perceiving certain aspects of form and colour.

One, however, of these child instincts, I believe that few forget, the emotion, namely, caused by all open ground, or lines of any spacious kind against the sky, behind which there might be conceived the sea. It is an emotion more pure than that caused by the sea itself, for I recollect distinctly running down behind the banks of a high beach to get their land line cutting against the sky, and receiving a more strange delight from this than from the sight of the ocean.

It is from experiences of this kind, though they may later become infinitely more complex, that all our delight in form arises. Ruskin's exposition of this point of view is scattered throughout his work; *Modern Painters* especially is devoted to it. It has been less clearly apprehended than it might have been because it is diffuse and elaborate, and also because it has constantly been expressed in theistic terms. To be talked to about God when he wants to look at pictures is apt to make the twentieth-century reader feel apprehensive. I believe that the alarm is unjustified. To Ruskin the formal attributes that delight us do so because they are a type of the Divine attributes: but without using theistic terminology at all the matter can still be explained. In experiencing the pleasures of sense, Ruskin says, we experience also the feeling of purpose and adaptation to our desires. Let us admit that the feeling of purpose may be illusory, and that Ruskin is often absurd in talking as though a personified Nature had made things beautiful merely for our satisfaction. The feeling, however, is still there; the pleasures of sense do seem adapted to our desires: and this is so because the world of forms and colours that we apprehend is an aspect of nature, of which we ourselves, our purposes and our desires, are also a part. Masses and space affect us emotionally because we are, among other things, masses extended in space. The perception of an order in nature affects us because it corresponds to a similar order in our own minds. It is possible of course to say that it is only our own minds that import this order into nature: in either case the satisfaction we experience is a recognition of our immersion in the natural world, a perception of our share in the order of nature. The extent to which we are capable of this depends partly on acuteness of sense-perception; but it depends still more on the quality of our general response to the world, what Ruskin would call the moral quality of our lives. Like Wordsworth Ruskin could describe himself as

well-pleased to recognise

In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

The emotions aroused by the world of form and colour perpetually overflow and mingle with the whole complex of emotions that make up our moral life. Hence it is without metaphor that Ruskin can speak of nobility in a natural scene or in the ornament of a Venetian capital.

In his best writing Ruskin does not use this idea as a means of by-passing the special functions of the arts and getting on to moral ground where he feels more secure. An appendix to *The Stones of*

Venice is devoted to the thesis 'that the business of a painter is to paint': he goes on to reprove the purists who, out of admiration for Fra Angelico and the moral and 'expressional' qualities of art, would altogether 'despise those men, Veronese and Rubens, for instance, who were painters par excellence, and in whom the expressional qualities were subordinate'. Rubens's 'masculine and universal sympathy' is as much an expression of man's moral nature as the delicate devotion of Angelico. The connection of art with morality is not that it expresses any particular kind of morality; but it does inevitably express not merely the technical skill, but the whole ethos of the artist and of the civilisation that produced him. *The Seven Lamps* and *The Stones of Venice* provide continual illustrations of this, some of them brilliant, like the chapter on the Nature of Gothic, some of them absurd, like the vagaries on Popery and Protestantism in cornices. The absurdities call attention to themselves, but they do not invalidate the general aim and method. Much of Ruskin's most illuminating criticism is done in moments of transition between technicalities and preaching; and whatever it is in less comprehensive minds, the continual tendency in him to pass from description and analysis of form to sociology, ethics or religion is a sign of strength, not of weakness. Indeed I believe that Ruskin is only doing continuously and on principle what all critics of art do more or less. You cannot say very much about the formal qualities of a design without going beyond purely formal terms; and Roger Fry, in his early work, continually makes this transition; as in this passage from his edition of Reynolds's *Discourses*:

In all that concerns the building up of a composition by the adjustment and balance of lighted and shaded planes Guercino must be accounted a scientific, if not an inspired master . . . Guercino was in a double sense an eclectic, since he learned his design from Lodovico Caracci, and combined with that the strong light and shade of the Naturalistic school . . . For all that, there is a virility and force about this St. Bruno which the Caracci would have considered vulgar and wanting in ideality.

The formal, the historical and the emotional estimates are all at work here: but the terms in which this last is discussed — virility, force, vulgarity, ideality — are moral terms, in the sense in which Ruskin uses the word when he says that 'the characteristic or moral elements of Gothic' are savageness, grotesqueness, rigidity and so forth. The passage from Roger Fry, as we have said, is an early one. We must now trace the process by which he came in his later writings to consider this apparently natural mode of expression illegitimate. He has himself summarised it with his customary lucidity in the *Retrospect*, written in 1920, at the end of *Vision and Design*.

He here sums up the view of his early *Essay in Aesthetics* (1909) by saying that he conceived the form of the work of art to be its most essential quality, but believed this form to be the direct outcome of an apprehension of some emotion of actual life by the artist. By an emotion of actual life he means what we might call a dramatic emotion derived from some aspect of human relationships: the forms of the angels in Giotto's *Pietà* are the outcome of 'a raging frenzy of compassion'. Fry's early writing is so haunted by this question of the relation between the dramatic emotion and the formal qualities of works of art, that it is curious to note how little, by comparison, it troubled Ruskin. Ruskin finds that what he calls the 'expressional' and the 'artistical' qualities are in fact always combined in a work of art, and there he is content to leave it. No doubt a good deal of this difference between the two is due to the difference of their early interests. Ruskin's early work is almost all on landscape, where the dramatic emotion can hardly be said to exist, while Fry's was particularly on paintings of religious themes, where the question of the dramatic representation of human emotion is continually brought to the fore. It was fortunate for Ruskin that this was so: in his age and with his lights he could hardly have said much that was useful about Roger Fry's problem: indeed when he does touch upon it he is particularly unilluminating. As it was, his energies were directed to a train of thought that he was exceptionally fitted to pursue — the elaborate analysis of the visual appearance of nature. Roger Fry on the other hand, in a long essay of 1901, wrestles with the task of explaining the frescoes of Giotto in a way which will do justice to both their formal and their dramatic qualities.

In the *Pietà* a more epic conception is realised, for the impression conveyed is of a universal and cosmic disaster: the air is rent with the shrieks of desperate angels whose bodies are contorted in a raging frenzy of compassion. And the effect is due in part to the increased command, which the Paduan frescoes show, of simplicity and logical directness of design. These massive boulder-like forms, these draperies cut only by a few large sweeping folds, which suffice to give the general movement of the figure with unerring precision, all show this new tendency in Giotto's art as compared with the more varied detail, the more individual characterisation of his early works.

Here, as he says himself in the *Retrospect*, he seems to regard the dramatic emotion and the formal expression of it as completely fused. But even here he is doubtful and rather on the defensive about this point of view.

It is true that in speaking of these frescoes one is led inevitably

to talk of elements in the work which modern criticism is apt to regard as lying outside the domain of pictorial art. It is customary to dismiss all that concerns the dramatic presentation of the subject as literature or illustration, which is to be sharply distinguished from the qualities of design. But can this clear distinction be drawn in fact?

Yet he continues to develop this attitude, with its implied opposition to Whistlerian impressionism, up to the time of the *Essay in Aesthetics*, and from it arises what is perhaps Fry's most illuminating piece of theorising, the attempt to show how purely formal and sensuous qualities come to affect our emotions.

The first element is that of the rhythm of the line with which the forms are delineated.

The drawn line is the record of a gesture, and that gesture is modified by the artist's feeling which is thus communicated to us directly.

The second element is mass. When an object is so represented that we recognise it as having inertia, we feel its power of resisting movement, or communicating its own movement to other bodies, and our imaginative reaction to such an image is governed by our experience of mass in actual life.

The third element is space. The same-sized square on two pieces of paper can be made by very simple means to appear to represent either a cube two or three inches high, or a cube of hundreds of feet, and our reaction to it is proportionately changed.

... Now it will be noticed that nearly all these emotional elements of design are connected with essential conditions of our physical existence: rhythm appeals to all the sensations which accompany muscular activity; mass to all the infinite adaptations to the force of gravity which we are forced to make; the spatial judgment is equally profound and universal in its application to life.

The passage is too long to quote in full, but it is a brilliant contribution to what is perhaps the basic question in all the arts — the connection between their complex and dynamic emotional effects, and the relatively simple and inert material means by which they are produced. It is incomparably more compressed and lucid than anything in Ruskin, but it belongs to the same order of ideas as many passages in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*.

Unhappily he does not proceed with it, but goes on to sum up his views on the relation of art to nature from another point of view.

He admits 'that there is beauty in Nature: that is to say that certain objects constantly do, perhaps any object may, compel us to regard it with that intense disinterested contemplation that belongs to the imaginative life': but that in objects created to arouse the aesthetic emotion, we have the added consciousness of purpose, that the artist 'made it on purpose, not to be used but to be regarded and enjoyed, and that this feeling is characteristic of the aesthetic judgment proper'. He feels too at this stage that pure formal elements, not allied to representation, are relatively weak in their effect on our emotions. When the artist wishes to arouse our emotions, he represents natural objects which are in themselves emotive, and uses them in such a way that the forms themselves, abstracted from that which they represent, generate in us emotional states, based on the physiological necessities which he has attempted to analyse above. Thus he reached two conclusions which were not necessary to Ruskin — that natural forms themselves cannot arouse powerful aesthetic emotions because they are not purposively designed: and that the artist's purpose must be fulfilled by representing objects which are in themselves emotive. Ruskin escapes from both these conclusions because he believes in the first place that natural forms *are* purposively designed, are made on purpose to be regarded and enjoyed as well as used; and secondly that they can arouse a powerful aesthetic emotion, apart from representation, because the main element of the aesthetic, or in his terms theoretic, emotion is the admiring and grateful sense of this purpose.

Fry's view, then, depends on his implicit denial of purpose in nature, and his extreme preoccupation with the expression of dramatic emotion. It was not likely that he would long remain satisfied with this. The dramatic emotion is clearly of great importance with some artists — Giotto for instance; with others — Cézanne, landscape painters in general — it seems hardly to occur at all. It cannot therefore be used to explain art in general. But the question of the dramatic emotion has so obsessed Fry's thinking, that when he is forced to give it up he feels bound to give up altogether the connection of the aesthetic experience with the rest of the emotional life. Instead of seeking a solution along the lines, for instance, that he himself had already indicated — the connection of our experience of form with the necessary conditions of our physical existence, and thus with the source of some of our deepest emotions — he now begins the attempt to isolate the experience of formal relations from every other kind of experience.

The turning-point in Fry's thought occurred when he became acquainted with the work of Cézanne; this was followed by the study of other post-Impressionists, and resulted in the organisation of the post-Impressionist exhibition in 1911. As a consequence of this

study Fry discovered first 'that art had begun to recover once more the language of design'; secondly (this must have been the result of conversations with post-Impressionist artists themselves) that artists who were extremely sensitive to formal relations often had almost no sense of the emotions he supposed them to convey. He considers the case of Raphael's Transfiguration and finds that the means used to convey the dramatic emotion have become so out of date that they no longer succeed in conveying it at all. Yet the formal relations still stand, and still constitute a great picture. He concludes that people have formerly supposed themselves to be moved by the dramatic emotions when they were really moved by purely formal considerations. He suggests that when Goethe explains the unity of this composition by saying 'Below, the suffering and the needy; above, the powerful and helpful — mutually dependent, mutually illustrative', he was really moved by the coherence of the design, but mistook the source of his emotion and gave an explanation in moral terms.

Faced with this difficulty Fry concludes that the only solution is to abandon, along with the dramatic emotion, all attempt to relate the formal experience to the emotions of the rest of life, and to isolate 'this purely aesthetic quality to which Mr. Clive Bell gives the name of "significant form"'. But he never quite accepts in its entirety this conception, most closely associated with the name of Mr. Clive Bell, of 'the pure contemplation of spatial relations . . . independent of all associations from past life'. Indeed he hardly could, for he has himself brilliantly shown how our contemplation of spatial relations is inevitably bound up with the physical conditions of our existence, hence with a whole complex of associations from past life. And it is this haunting sense of dissatisfaction with the isolation of pure formal experience that makes Roger Fry's work so interesting.

Yet the gulf between our sense of form in a work of art and our previous experience of form in nature is to him impassable because he cannot feel that there is any purpose in the forms of nature: the formal material that nature provides must therefore always remain an 'intractable material which is alien to our spirit'. To Ruskin there was no difficulty; his theistic philosophy can easily bridge the gulf; the forms of nature are beautiful to us because God intended them to be so. We are impelled then to ask ourselves whether the attempt to relate aesthetic experiences to the other experiences of life is dependent on a theistic philosophy. It has already been suggested that it is not. Yet it seems probable that it is dependent on some unifying principle, on some attitude in which it is possible to see all our diverse experiences from a single point. The concluding passage of *Vision and Design*, where Fry discussed the value of the aesthetic emotion, indicates that he himself realised this.

As to the value of the aesthetic emotion — it is clearly infinitely removed from those ethical values to which Tolstoy would have confined it. It seems to be as remote from actual life and its practical utilities as the most useless mathematical theory. One can only say that those who experience it feel it to have a peculiar quality of 'reality' which makes it a matter of infinite importance in their lives. Any attempt I might make to explain this would probably land me in the depths of mysticism. On the edge of that gulf I stop.

But why stop? If a train of thought has led to a point where it can only be completed by mysticism, why not complete it nevertheless? It is here that the contemporary climate of opinion, the unrecognised philosophical *ambiente*, becomes important. At the back of Fry's thought, as of that of so many intellectuals in his time, there seems to be an unstated but ever-present belief that any unifying principle must be inadmissible, that any attempt to survey experience comprehensively must be obscurantist and slightly disreputable. Hence Fry's use of the word mysticism, which I think is used here at least partly in the pejorative sense of something cloudy and ill-defined. So Roger Fry's theory must remain incomplete: having gone as far as anyone in the sensitive experience and lucid analysis of the aesthetic emotions, he leaves them cut off, drawing no nourishment from the rest of life, giving none to it. This perhaps is the reason that Fry's writing has had less effect on the general mind than Ruskin's, in spite of its vastly greater clarity. His aesthetic theory remains like a beautiful new motor car, its lines admirably designed for power and ease of control; the only thing necessary to make it go is that he should put some petrol in it. But faced with that awe-compelling necessity he stops.

He feels that mysticism is a gulf in which the intelligence must suffer shipwrecks. There are of course those who would still take the plunge. *E il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare*. But the kind of mysticism necessary to complete Roger Fry's theory is hardly more mysterious than the existence of a pure aesthetic emotion unrelated to anything else. The pure contemplation of spatial and formal relations gives us a sense of reality because it is an apprehension of one kind of reality — the formal nature of the world of which we are a part. Experiences of space and form are a part of our ordinary experience. Both Ruskin and Roger Fry have been particularly skilful at analysing them and their emotional effects. It is of such experiences that the aesthetic experience is made up. There is nothing particularly rare about them: the only thing that is rare is the education of the sensibilities to a degree at which we become fully conscious of them, become capable of abstracting them from the accidents by which they are attended. By intense contemplation of

mysticism
Fry's theory

such experiences of form and space we become conscious of the unity between ourselves and the natural world: the formal material which nature provides is no longer an 'intractable material which is alien to our spirit'; our experience of it is a part of the conditions of our existence. It is true that this sense of unity is always being lost; the artist has to recreate it. Often his personal mode of doing so is incomprehensible to his age; then the visual sensibility has to be re-educated, and few men have done more of this than Ruskin and Roger Fry. But Ruskin is clearer about what he is doing: as the wide tracts of Modern Painters begin to open out before him he realises that his business 'is not now to distinguish between disputed degrees of ability in individuals, or agreeableness in canvases; it is not now to expose the ignorance or defend the principles of party or person; it is to summon the moral energies of the nation to a forgotten duty, to display the use, force and function of a great body of neglected sympathies and desires'.

The words Roger Fry needs to complete his theory are quoted by Ruskin from Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae*: *Deum sempiternum, immensum, omniscium, omnipotentem expergefactus transeuntem vidi, et obstupui*. 'As one awakened out of sleep I saw the Lord passing by — eternal, infinite, omniscient and omnipotent, and I stood as in a trance.' That is expressed in theistic terms, but it is a mistake to suppose that what has been expressed in theistic terms is necessarily unavailable to those who are unwilling to use them. We must continue, as Ruskin does, the quotation from Linnaeus. 'I saw animals dependent on vegetables, vegetables on things earthly, things earthly on the globe of the earth, then, by never-shaken law, the globe of the earth to revolve around the sun from which it has its loan of life.' That is the sort of unified vision of the world attainable by natural science: but it is wholly analogous to the unified vision attainable by art. The vision of Linnaeus did not come by an unrelated intuition, but as a result of years of precise observation of particulars. So the aesthetic vision described by Roger Fry does not come unexplained, unrelated, as the gift of a special aesthetic sense, but as a result of a multitude of experiences of individual forms and relations. It is Roger Fry's special distinction to have shown that the aesthetic experience is not compounded out of pre-existent dramatic emotions, as the literary critic of art would have it. It is Ruskin's special distinction to show how it is abstracted from a multitude of sense-experiences, to have shown how the experience of the senses can lead directly to that unified apprehension of nature, and of ourselves as a part of nature, which can fairly constantly be recognised, under various mythological disguises, not only as that which gives value to aesthetic experience, but also as one of the major consolations of philosophy.

THE POLITICS OF SENATOR CROCE

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I. 1866-1915: *The Philosophic Preparation*

December 15th, 1943: lay awake last night from two to five thinking how everything we Italians have been building for over a century is now destroyed. Only in our hearts ideals still live on.

So runs an entry from Croce's diary during the anguish of liberation, when, after being taken off to Capri in a British motor launch, he used to look up from the proofs of his *History of Naples* to watch the bombing of his home city across the bay. One day we shall find a rich source-book of history in that diary, as in the memoirs of which part at least are already in manuscript, and in the many large files which he has prepared for the future documentation of fascism and anti-fascism. For the present in these short articles we can only anticipate in outline that history, to see how it has been for him a challenge and incentive to deep thought, and how for Italy he has carried over through destruction the old ideals and the *douceur de vivre* of her liberal past.

Though primarily a philosopher, Croce held cabinet rank in the two critical years of 1921 and 1944, and his life therefore shows some of the more interesting problems that arise when a philosopher becomes a politician. Like Wells and Shaw, in a lifetime of writing he has put an indelible stamp on several generations of his countrymen; but the application of his philosophy to practical politics has either seemed disillusioning to his disciples or else a *non sequitur*, and the liberal party withered under his leadership. There is something of tragedy in the life of a man who after fifty years of study and creative thought became a politician in the vain attempt to stave off the hideous nightmare of fascism which some elements in his own thought had seemed to connive at; who as a historian saw the necessity of fascism, but as a man had to watch the crumbling of all he stood for. Politics not being his *métier*, Croce's political thought is not organised and synthesised like his philosophy, but has developed through empirical reactions to concrete situations, and must be looked for rather in the *obiter dicta* of a man who in an exceptionally long and full life has been able to search and interpret the intellectual foundations of the modern world. At the age of 81 he combines, so Collingwood wrote to him, the wisdom of age with the vigour of inexhaustible youth. Though he is no longer the

'latest thing', and though under fascism he suffered from lack of free discussion and good criticism, he is still the greatest Italian and perhaps the greatest philosopher now alive, and it would be surprising not to find in his political thought a rich and rare wine of long maturing.

In his early years Croce was purely the antiquarian and man of letters, averse to politics by training and temperament. Still to day, with his favourite day-dream of a whitewashed cell in a sunny seventeenth-century cloister shut off from the world, he does not gladly return from sunlight to the dark cave. Political life everywhere, and not least in pre-fascist Italy, is more or less unclean to the purist, and more or less transient and insignificant to the philosopher. Croce has never looked for salvation in material things like prosperity, industrialisation or universal suffrage. Rather he looked for the substance beneath apparent forms, and found that every political system could be acceptable or repugnant according to circumstances. Philosophy was impartial above all parties, embracing and indeed needing them all. When Einstein hailed him as Plato's long-awaited philosopher king, Croce repudiated the title; he was no king, but keeper of the king's conscience. He saw that Gentile had fouled philosophy by contamination with fascism, that Hegel's Ethical State had been but a tendentious rationalisation of restoration Prussia. The philosopher's wisdom being other than the politician's, he should never pronounce *ex cathedra* on politics, and a philosopher king would be a monstrous contradiction in terms.

But circumstances, in particular the lack of good liberal politicians, were to force Croce into politics, and ironically he, too, was one day to be taxed with perverting history by propaganda for a discredited political opinion. One can watch his philosophy becoming increasingly practical, and himself less the intellectual dilettante. Every philosophical problem, he maintained, should first arise in actual life, and its solution should then be applied to life. Like poetry, philosophy was nourished by common experiences, and could barely live at all in an academic atmosphere. Latterly he has concluded that abstract, professional philosophy is almost irrelevant, that 'as an autonomous science and metaphysics it is dead',¹ or at least it should only come in at occasional crises to remove particular moral and intellectual obstacles when they arise.² Far more important was the application of philosophical thought to facts, studying history as a testing ground for philosophical theories and a process of mental clarification. Historical problems for him were always contemporary problems, and historical research, though always non-

¹ *La Storia Come Pensiero E Come Azione*, 1943: p. 22.

² *Contributo Alla Critica Di Me Stesso*, 1945: p. 64.

partisan, grew from present political passion and led to action.¹ As thought and action incessantly stimulated and fertilised each other, so philosophy led to practical politics, even though it could not in itself prescribe what sort. Croce followed through this argument to conclude that 'ideals were not fully themselves until transmuted into forces', that the service of ideals demanded serpent-like wisdom as well as dove-like purity, and that the intellectual must in crises become the politician and fight like Socrates at Potidea or Dante at Campaldino. All men were not politicians, as all were not poets or heroes, but a poet or philosopher could not help being a citizen, and despite the danger of contamination he should necessarily interest himself in politics, not to become a political poet but a better poet. Though there was in life a natural division of labour and aptitude, one had sometimes to break down the division lest it became real separation and so mutual sterilisation.

It was, however, only in critical moments that the philosopher would become the active politician. Normally the business of government would be left (dangerous thought) to the specialists, to Mosca's 'political class'. The politician needed not philosophy but good sense, experience, enthusiasm and determination. The philosopher's real function, as a spirit in at least relative equipoise, was defining truth and error, giving precision and clear sightedness in ideas, redressing temporary loss of balance, being pro-German in 1915 and anti-fascist in 1925. He should be the conservative who finds in history the inescapable context for all reform, and so stresses the traditions whose tenuous ligament holds society from catastrophe. He really knows men, where the politician knows but how to manage them.

Politics being what they are, the person who objects to compromises, or to certain methods and certain kinds of people does well to withdraw from them, and to work by himself on lines which do not do violence to his nature. Only thus can he preserve his self respect, and his temperament will render it impossible to work otherwise than half-heartedly and badly in any other way. Moreover that which goes by the name of politics in the strict sense is but a part, if the most conspicuous part of political activity, in which is included the exercise of moral authority over one's fellow-citizens.²

Since 'no truth or beauty can be attained by those imprisoned in worldly passions and purposes',³ the philosopher must bring this truth and beauty to the world, and will have scant time or skill for

¹ *Il Carattere Della Filosofia Moderna*, 1945: p. 98.

² *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, 1929: pp. 12-13.

³ *Pagine Politiche*, 1945: p. 35.

politics proper. For Croce clearly distinguished absolute values like science, art and morality from those empirical, relative values embodied in the forms of church or state, monarchy or republic, France or Italy. The first were philosophic, and might not prescribe for us one side or other in the second which were political.¹ Croce's liberalism had thus two planes of existence: as a pure concept which welcomed all parties 'except the most extremely illiberal'; and as itself one among other parties, which could fight, and compromise, and trim its policy to suit events. Croce could be both thinker and publicist, both philosophic liberal and leader of the liberal party, but never both at the same moment, for the two would not mix without contamination.²

This was in part a self-justification worked out when in 1924 fascism by opposition forced him for the first time from his eminence of philosophy into party politics, and he had to meet the same objection he had levelled at other philosophers that the detachment of his thought might suffer thereby. Croce was in practice to find it impossible to keep his political and philosophical pronouncements separate: and indeed, if the human spirit was one and indivisible, how could a philosopher speak on politics otherwise than as a philosopher? In which capacity did he condemn communism, democracy, the Munich agreement or the 1947 treaty? If 'all thought is philosophy whatever it is about',³ was not political thought philosophically true? What room was left for a liberal party when philosophic liberalism was neither conservative nor progressive but both at once, adopting the consensus of view between parties? If thought led to action why had Croce lingered in his superior world too long to pull his weight against the great enemy of all philosophy, fascism? As an impartial historian he recognised the need for local autonomy in Italy,⁴ while as a partial politician he opposed on principle all the interesting schemes of regionalism and federalism which many Italians have always thought specially suitable for their country. Croce the politician in 1940 stood for his country right or wrong; the philosopher was with the Allies. Evidently Croce's resolution of the problem does not satisfy. His own life shows how much philosophy has to say on politics, but his theory does not explain why philosophers are often such inept politicians. We shall see that the disastrous collapse of the Italian liberal party, which from its creation by Cavour had been health-giver to the body politic, was partly due to this obscurity in thought, preventing alike any philosophic condemnation of fascism, or the statement of a

¹ *Cultura E Vita Morale*, 1926: p. 184.

² *La Critica*, Vol. 23, 1925: pp. 305, 374.

³ *An Autobiography*, 1926: p. 109.

⁴ *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, 1929: p. 44.

strong party programme for liberals, or the apportionment of even relative justice between parliamentary groups.

For thirty years after his birth in 1866 Croce, though naturally aware of political events, lived a life of undistinguished research. He found philosophy incomprehensible, and had not yet learned the hollowness of its professional obfuscations. His family environment was reactionary Bourbonism, and as such outside live politics. While still at school he lost his catholic faith, and one may say that anti-clericalism became his first as it was to be his most consistent political belief. True, he was to defend the Inquisition's right of intolerance as historically necessary. He also joined with churchmen to combat freemasonry as secret and corrupt, and modernism as logically absurd. But liberals, he thought, should leave the church altogether, for it was *necessarily* illiberal.¹ Her interest was the salvation of souls, and liberty would be accepted or repudiated as conducing or not to this end. Decadent for four centuries, and still 'inescapably declining', the church was 'completely unproductive in the field of thought and culture, though she partially succeeds in concealing her aridity by borrowing methods, ideas and results from lay thought'.² At the same time Croce was profoundly religious, and saw the fundamental problem of our own and of all times as religious. The religion of our own age was 'exclusively' that of Liberty: yet he called himself a Christian, 'all the more Christian because free from the churches', and considered Christianity to be the greatest revolution completed by mankind.³

More important for his political development was the crisis of marxism 1895-98, when first his mind 'burst into flame'. Croce now thinks his interest in socialism was less that of a partial convert than for the light it could throw on the problems of philosophy and history.⁴ But leading Italian marxists and many others once thought of him as himself a marxist, and his own autobiography recalls how socialist visions of redemption gave him new faith and hope. Later he wrote of this period:

Marxian socialism came to fill the void created in Italian thought and ideals by the devastating work of positivism and its accompanying pessimism . . . To remain uninfluenced by and indifferent to it, or to assume as some did an attitude of unreasoning hostility to it, was a sure sign of inferiority . . . The ferment produced a whole complex of results, correcting,

¹ *Pensiero Politico E Politica Attuale*, 1946: p. 68. *Per La Nuova Vita Dell' Italia*, 1944: p. 92.

² *Politics and Morals*, 1946: p. 93.

³ *Perché Non Possiamo Non Dirci Cristiani*, 1943.

⁴ *La Stampa*, Turin, July 6th, 1947.

renewing, deepening, and giving a new content to Italian culture, which had been flaccid and invertebrate . . . It had been assumed that ideas can exist apart from the efforts of human thought and will, and that they can be realised by other means than that of hard work. Instead of all this people [now] turned to the idea of force . . . for ideals are not fully themselves until they are transmuted into forces . . . With the marxians, Machiavelli returned to Italy.¹

To Croce this brought the first semblance of political passion. In a quasi-religious conversion he foreswore antiquarian research for ever; life left time only for the most burning practical problems. More than two years he worked hard at all the great economists from Smith to Marshall and Pareto, first trying to defend marxism, but ending up profoundly critical. Though he exaggerated the importance in history of his own destruction of marxist theory, both Bernstein and his friend Sorel accepted his conclusions, and the pure doctrine died not to return in the same form. Its economics were illogical, and so was the attempt to abolish social inequality. Historical materialism was false both as materialistic and deterministic, and while it enriched our knowledge of history by new and suggestive interpretations, this was mainly through the Hegelian derivatives it incorporated.² Marx was in fact unfortunate for communism, which before his time in England and France had not been notably or usually illiberal. He had brought to it the ruthless qualities of a typical Prussian and the pedantic systematism of the German university world, together with a judaic apocalypticism and readiness to overthrow the Christian tradition of European civilisation. Croce fully recognised that in one respect Marx was unassailable, as a revolutionary genius who gave impetus and consistency to a class movement, and armed it with an economic and historical doctrine designed for this special purpose. Marx wished not to understand the world, but to change it, and so fashioned his beliefs as politically useful rather than true. The disinterested search for truth had no point for him, who was incapable of loving truth as others were incapable of loving music or poetry.³

Croce came away from this prolonged tussle against Marx with a fine appreciation of the dialectic process, of progress through the interaction and mutual incorporation of opposites, and so reached some of his most characteristic beliefs. History never showed the conflict of truth against falsehood, but always these two positive, necessary opposites working themselves out in a rational and

¹ *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, 1929: pp. 148-52.

² *Il Nuovo Corriere Della Sera*, Milan, July 13th, 1947.

³ *La Critica*, Vol. 36, 1938: pp. 35-52, 109-24.

necessary solution. Implied in this was a belief in the virtue of conflict, and in liberty to give play to the variety and conflict of forces which continually enriched life. Truth was never attained once for all: therefore no philosophy was more than partly true, or true only to its age, and none could ever be definitive or dogmatic; nor in politics was there one ideal form of state or government. Each age removed one more obstacle, but every problem resolved posed more problems, and so on for ever through a series of provisional syntheses. This made the trade of philosopher essentially one of collaboration with past thinkers, and one should speak not of 'my' but of 'our' philosophy. 'Like Jesus every philosopher brings not peace but a sword, and with it the new life that comes with conflict.'¹ Croce's own point of departure had been Hegel, from whom he assimilated all that came alive in his own mind.² From positivism, evil though it was, Croce welcomed the healthy reaction against idealist philosophy. From Marx he absorbed Machiavelli, and acquired both a new empirical canon of historical interpretation, and an alliance against the rugged antiquarians. Croce knew that also his own philosophy would have to be a series of changing positions, slowly and painfully responding to an inner struggle for mental clarity, and bound to yield when age or death should halt this ceaseless process of change.

The first decade of this century marked Croce's appearance as a philosopher of international repute. Outside the narrowing influence of universities and parliaments, which like all institutions must be conservative and deterrent from new and unconventional thinking, he brought a new broom into all fields of thought and art. All that could be done by a burning zeal for truth and a fine training in critical scholarship he put towards recovering for Italy an active part in the thought of Europe. This time it was not a simple enemy like marxism that he had to wrestle with, but almost the whole range of contemporary beliefs. Apart from transcendental theology, there were all the other closed or final systems of metaphysics. Hegel's idealism had to be broken down so that 'the fertile seeds of truth which it contained might be released and transplanted to the new soil created by the course of intervening intellectual and moral history'.³ At the other end were all the various materialist philosophies corroding society, like nationalism and communism, both similar he noted, and recruiting from each other; or psychology and sociology. Croce had once tried unsuccessfully to think like Spencer. Now he saw that positivism had evidently failed to create a philosophy: just as the general acceptance of those truths it contained took away

¹ *Pagine Sparse*, 1943; Vol. II, p. 199; Vol. III, p. 469.

² *Ciò Che È Vivo È Ciò Che È Morto Della Filosofia Di Hegel*, 1906.

³ *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, 1929: p. 244.

the reason of its further existence, so its agnosticism outside the findings of science left untouched and unsatisfied the indwelling spirit of man.

Another enemy was yet more insidious because itself part of this reaction against the cult of science. In the same world where scientific studies stood above humanist and speculative studies, people were thinking less actively of moral and political things, and this meant that faith and enthusiasm could only be assured by irrational and mystical beliefs. Aestheticism, Futurism, Theosophy, Buddhism, Franciscan Mysticism, and Philosophies of Intuition and the Will to Power were only extreme instances of a general cult of the Irrational, which 'removed logical restraints, weakened all critical faculty, and brushed aside the responsibility of rational assent'. No longer were distinctions kept clear between truth and falsehood, duty and pleasure, morality and utility, artistic taste and sensual enjoyment, originality and extravagance, spontaneity and lack of discipline. The relations of all this with fascism will not easily be ignored, and in fighting it Croce rightly claims to have been engaged in politics in the broad sense of that word. But his only weapon was logic, and with a typical resignation which some thought determinism he observed that irrationalism, 'a world-wide movement which rested on genuine motives, was not to be stayed by force of argument. It had to run its course full circle until it brought about its own refutation, not by arguments but by facts'.¹ D'Annunzio was its most typical and sinister product, who fashioned the plastic minds of Italian youth with his decadent and uncreative repetition on the themes of sadism, cruelty and sensualism.² He stood for a

psychological plutocracy that seeks what is gaudy and sparkling and fundamentally coarse . . . that uneasy condition of mind, a combination of lust for enjoyment, the spirit of adventure and joy in conquest, fanatic craving after power, restlessness and withal lack of enthusiasm and indifference, a state of mind that must be looked for in a life lived divorced from its centre, that centre being for man his moral and religious consciousness

Such was the Italian state of mind before 1914. But if mere reason and ridicule could kill, Croce had killed them all, materialisms, irrationalisms, catholicism and the rest. His own school, what he with pardonable vanity calls 'modern thought', no longer recognised their existence. In 1902 he had written the *Aesthetics*, after five months of intense thought without reading anything. As one question led to another there had followed the *Logic*, and the successive treatises on philosophy. Above all there was that extraordinary journal *La*

¹ *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, 1929: pp. 241, 250.

² *Giosué Carducci*, 1920: pp. 3-5; *La Critica*, Vol. 33, 1935: pp. 171-81.

Critica, mostly from his own pen with Gentile collaborating at first, which has continued from 1903 without a break. Against positivists and antiquarians on the one hand, and the mystics and dilettanti on the other, it reasserted the speculative and dialectic in philosophy. The growing fervour it aroused 'will be noted one day among the noblest features of our generation, with great and good effects for the civil life of Italy now and in the future'.¹ Most important to note is that the *Critica* rigidly excluded politics, and at first even neglected history. Though Croce felt the spiritual needs of the time, he imagined politics were safe with the honourable Giolitti. Under such a 'progressive and perfect liberal regime'² he thought a philosopher needed not to interfere with the class of expert politicians. Superficial well-being partly concealed from him the egregious mediocrity of statesmen, the corruption of deputies, the lack of principle and of stability in politics, the apathy of electors, the bare bone poverty of the peasants, the increase of violence, and economic changes that were upsetting the whole balance of classes. A man cannot see everything, and Croce already had more than one man's job. The pity was that since the days of the novelist doctor Farini, the scientist Sella, and the *littérateur* Mazzini, thinkers and politicians had been drifting ever more dangerously apart. War and dictatorship stood on the threshold and no prophet cried woe.

Even after he became a Senator in 1910 Croce continued to stand right outside politics in the narrow sense. His occasional writings indicated little concern with universal suffrage or African wars. Mental equilibrium and spiritual *finezza* were a conquest worth more than Lybia,³ however much the British Empire convinced him of the high moral value of liberal imperialism. In this belief he went on building up his own interim synthesis of modern thought, round the central identification of philosophy with liberty and with history. This was for him fully a religion. Liberty in every way coincided with Morality, and needed no addition of Justice or Fraternity for these it already comprised.⁴ Though in the long run liberty might be expedient or profitable, it was heresy to justify it like Mill on utilitarian grounds,⁵ and it had nothing to do with the greatest happiness principle. Fisher and the whig historians were wrong to make liberty less a universal value than a happy contingency of tradition and circumstance in the British Isles. It was the refusal to prize its absolute quality that led to Albion's well-known perfidy, just as it might also one day lead her to condone temporary dictator-

¹ *Pagine Sparse*, 1943, Vol. II; p. 334.

² *Per La Nuova Vita Dell' Italia*, 1944: p. 56.

³ *Cultura E Vita Morale*, 1926: p. 190. (1912).

⁴ *Libertà E Giustizia*, 1944: p. 9.

⁵ *Il Carattere Della Filosofia Moderna*, 1945; p. 114.

ship at home or abroad if the utilities of comfort and riches would so be better served.¹ Even Croce was here tinged with apocalypticism in his enviable certainty that liberalism would prevail because it satisfied the moral conscience; whereas nationalism and communism he thought but temporary products of human intoxication which would certainly fail because 'conflicting with the progress of thought and culture'. Though men were not wholly pure or wholly impure, they yet possessed this moral conscience and goodwill, for otherwise the world would be 'no longer worthy of life'.² In such a conviction of the inevitable triumph of freedom, Croce did not think out the obscure relations between philosophic liberalism and liberal party politics. Only afterwards and too late could he look back and see that political liberalism had been in full crisis even before 1914.

If history teaches us progress is inevitable, how should we not be optimistic? What need was there to attend the Senate? The dialectic collaboration through conflict between minds and between movements would never stop, for it was the substance of history, and only marxists and transcendentalists thought history would have an end. It was not decadence but spontaneous exhaustion and replacement that brought the end of one culture and its incorporation alive into the next, Greece to Christianity, Humanism to Illuminism, and now nineteenth-century Liberalism, itself fully worthy comparison with Periclean Athens and Renaissance Italy.³ This was perpetual progress. One would be blind not to see that as lay ideals had triumphed irrevocably over the churches, so today catholics and non-catholics, socialists and non-socialists had ideas and convictions in common far more than a century ago. Nothing was lost once created 'nothing could ever happen in vain or without fruit'.⁴ 'Decadence' could be used as a metaphor, but as an absolute concept never, for in history there was no decline that was not also the preparation of new life. There was no room for scepticism in this religion, even if it meant final truth was unattainable. It was a faith in the power of reason based on Goethe's belief in spiral, not rectilinear, progress.⁵

The concept of truth as history tempers the conceit of today and opens up hopes for tomorrow; for the despairing sense of struggling in vain to pursue a quarry that always flies and hides, it substitutes the consciousness of always possessing a wealth that always increases.⁶

¹ *La Critica*, Vol. 36, 1938: p. 55.

² *Politics and Morals*, 1946: p. 94.

³ *Propositi E Speranze, 1925-1942*, 1944: p. 62.

⁴ *Storia D'Europa Nel Secolo Decimonono*, 1932: p. 358.

⁵ *Orientamenti*, 1934: p. 83; *Pagine Politiche*, 1945: p. 90.

⁶ *An Autobiography*, 1926: p. 107.

This ubiquitous and omniscient quality of history is fundamental to an understanding of Croce's thought: in politics it has helped to make him deeply conservative, and perhaps too retrospective of view to be ever successful. History must in some way be true because it has actually happened. As Vico explained, historical truth could be understood by man because history was his own work, but nature could not, because it was the work of God. Man being produced by the past lived immersed in it, and could never get outside the swirl of history to attain any truth that lay above or beyond it.¹ Philosophy and history were thus one, the study of how the spirit of man dealt with events through the constant change of historical circumstance and yet stayed the same. History should study not facts but their meaning for ourselves; not men or institutions as such, but only as related to the central theme of the culture and spirit of an age. The duty of historians was to keep alive a society's awareness of its own past, the past which was part of its present, and so doing to increase its knowledge of itself; furthermore since thought demands action, to provide society with all it needed of self-knowledge and past knowledge for the future.² Their duty was therefore in a real sense political. 'Historical knowledge consists of the basic truths which we need for political action, without which we should walk blindly in a blind world.'³ History was a sort of philosophy in action. It was not the old antiquarian idea of a series of external facts, but those facts transmuted in the minds of each generation of historians. Always there would be transmutation, for each mind and generation brought new experiences and a new context to the process. Since no one could say he had understood a thought unless he could pass judgment on it, so the writing of history was the judging or philosophising of facts. No detail was too small if linked to some principle. All history was contemporary history, and every history book ought essentially to be autobiography, and to take charge of historical problems as if they were a personal drama in the author's soul. Objectiveness, by a paradox, could not be reached otherwise than by this rigidly subjective approach.⁴

In his idea of justification by history Croce came near to determinism. 'It is an axiom universally true that if a man behaved as he did he could not have behaved otherwise, as is proved by him in fact not behaving otherwise.'⁵ All that happened was reasonable, the real was always rational, and all facts fitted into some rational order. To an Oxford congress of philosophers he explained that 'the Second Empire was without doubt a necessity, a rational necessity;

¹ *La Critica*, Vol. 42, March 1944: p. 53.

² *La Storia Come Pensiero E Come Azione*, 1943: p. 198.

³ *Pagine Politiche*, 1945: p. 53.

⁴ *La Critica*, Vol. 26, 1928: pp. 231-2.

⁵ *Pagine Politiche*, 1945: p. 56.

and inasmuch as it was a rational necessity it was also beneficent'.¹ Indeed every state or political system had in its own day its own sufficient utility, 'even the greatest utility it could have had at the moment'.² Medieval tyrants in crushing close liberties were true to their age and in a real sense liberal: so was the Inquisition, defending a great and necessary institution that was fulfilling the ends of civilisation. Caesar was 'justified' for depriving Rome of liberty, and so was Brutus for killing him. It was silly of modern Italians to want local self-government on the English model, for 'if Italy had required institutions of this kind she would have created them'.³ If dictatorships existed they were easily justifiable, for their very existence proved they had good reason to exist. All these 'justifications' were, however, historical only, never moral; and if Croce justified the historical necessity and beneficence of marxism in the dialectic process, he explained it only to explain it away.

It is the more important to realise that Croce reconciled these views on historical necessity with the freedom of human will. He held that while we could go on using metaphorically the word 'cause', the concept of cause was to be excluded from history as incompatible with free will. Though all events in history were linked, though 'in a single word there vibrates the whole of world history', it was impossible to find sufficient and satisfying causes for anything.⁴ It was wrong to say that certain facts determined subsequent events, nor should you look in one period for an explanation of the next but rather in the next itself. Fascism fitted into a rational pattern, but was not inevitable, simply because every man had in him possibilities of both good and evil. 'History does not consist in understanding causes, but in understanding the quality or character of a fact, and seeing it in relation to other facts in the process of development or dialectic.'⁵ Poverty and climate did not *cause* the history of Naples, for one could possess a world of riches and yet lose one's soul; poverty was important, but only when linked to the central theme which had to be not causal or materialistic but inward and spiritual.⁶ The future historian would always justify past action as necessary, for that was his job: but equally necessary was it for the living contemporary agent of history to choose and fight as his own conscience prescribed. If the existence of Nicholas I was rational and necessary, so was that of the nihilists who opposed him, and his necessity should never argue for quietism. Historical necessity did not deny personal free-

¹ *La Critica*, Vol. 28, 1930: (speech, July 7th, 1930).

² *Pagine Sparse*, 1943: vol. II, p. 372.

³ *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, 1929: p. 24.

⁴ *La Critica*, Vol. 24, 1926; pp. 60-1.

⁵ *Quaderni Della Critica*, No. 6, November, 1946: pp. 85-6, 102.

⁶ *Storia Del Regno Di Napoli*, 1931; pp. 279-80.

dom, only *inconcludenza logica*; there was nothing accidental that ever happened.

Some people will still find it hard to see how this does not make history that retrospective consecration of success for which Croce blamed Ranke. Twice Croce evidently changed to accept the *fait accompli* of war in 1915 and the early fascism of 1922-24 — common-sense realism perhaps, but other people showed by their attitude that it was unnecessary and perhaps unfortunate. In effect, if not in theory, his preaching was deterministic. Before deciding for the war he wrote that 'whether or no we fight will depend not on us but on the necessity which will impose on us one or other decision'.¹ For the same reason he was in 1944 to advise his liberal party not to prejudge the issue of monarchy or republic until 'the necessity of things' decided for one or the other; and he recalled that in 1860 Mazzini's republican propaganda had been fruitless because against what was then 'a necessity arising out of history'.² People might be excused for thinking this meant that historical necessity relieved them of the obligation or possibility of making up their minds on contemporary politics.

Again with the concept of blame or responsibility, Croce in practice went on using words which were philosophically empty or illegitimate, just as he went on using the words 'if', 'cause', 'ought to have', 'might have'. The neutral mentality of England was in 1914 and 1938 a disastrous 'error'.³ King Victor Emmanuel was 'blamed' for compromising his dynasty, and given with Mussolini 'responsibility' for the war.⁴ Napoleon and all dictators were to be measured by the 'moral test' of whether they worshipped God or themselves,⁵ and the Germans would be morally condemned by history for their treatment of the Czechs.⁶ No doubt this was Croce the later anti-fascist publicist. The philosopher maintained that just as one never would know who fired first, so the search for responsibility in wars was vain. It was incongruous and meaningless to *blame* Caesar for crushing freedom, nor could one say whether the Inquisition or its victims were *right*. Cavour had demonstrated that active plotting for war might be in no way culpable. For the moment in history we should suspend mentally the struggles between men, since history, like a true neutral, included and transcended both sides, superior to both, intent only on providing the light asked of it. It saw the individual 'not as one who had to choose his own path, but as one who

¹ *Pagine Sulla Guerra*, 1928: p. 27 (1915).

² *Pagine Politiche*, 1945: p. 42.

³ *Pensiero Politico E Politica Attuale*, 1946: p. 151; *Quaderni Della Critica*, No. 4, April, 1946: p. 77.

⁴ *Per La Nuova Vita Dell' Italia*, 1944: p. 76; *Pagine Politiche*, 1945: p. 59.

⁵ *La Critica*, Vol. 28, 1930: p. 299.

⁶ *Quaderni Della Critica*, No. 2, August, 1945: p. 87.

executed the role cast for him by the course of things and by the mission he carried within him'.¹ The past was to be understood, not to be censured, nor to have its errors pointed out; nor would the historian presume to counsel or reprove living politicians in order to influence their future policy. For his concern was the past, 'which has happened in the way it had because willed so by God, or by the world spirit, or (if the communists wish) by the dialectical necessity of matter'.²

The coming of war in 1914 put such views to the test. 'No one wanted it, no one knew why they were fighting: it just broke out through the folly of German militarists and English merchants.'³ Perhaps some wretch of a diplomat failed in some particular, but Berchtold's incompetence and the Kaiser's neurasthenia lost all sense and importance in face of the boundless catastrophe that ensued, and only those politicians could be *blamed* who had failed to protect the interests of their country or had used their position to further private gains or grudges.⁴ Croce has never been expert in international politics. In 1914 he was a noted *triplicista* and fully shared in that profound cultural influence of Germany over Italy which only nazism has shaken.⁵ Yet at the time he argued neither for war nor neutrality, since Necessity or Providence would decide the issue. You could not argue people into war, only fall into it like love; nor could it be opposed any more than an earthquake.

It cannot be said that [the neutralists] were wrong any more than this can be said of their opponents: for differences of this kind cannot be decided in the courts, nor by scientific criticism; both points of view were necessary to political action, or, as the saying runs, if either of the opposing contentions had been absent it would have been necessary to invent it.⁶

With the achievement of his fiftieth year in 1915 there came a natural division in Croce's life. Henceforward he was more the politician and was forced to act as though events could be shaped and opponents blamed, forced therefore to discover how two discordant natures could co-exist in one mind. Already on the eve of war he had headed the conservative *Fascio dell'Ordine* in the municipal elections at Naples, and had even harangued the crowd in perhaps the only *piazza* speech of his life—he the great enemy of D'Annunzian (and Italian?) rhetoric. Now succeeded war, revolution, tyranny,

¹ *La Storia Come Pensiero E Come Azione*, 1943: pp. 34-5.

² *Pagine Politiche*, 1945: pp. 56-7.

³ *Quaderni Della Critica*, No. 4, April, 1946: p. 71.

⁴ *La Critica*, Vol. 29, 1931: p. 391.

⁵ His book *Teoria E Storia Della Storiografia*, was first published in German at Tübingen in 1915.

⁶ *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, 1929: p. 284.

persecution: each with new reason to question whether the real was always rational; whether the worship of history was not wicked idolatry; whether what has happened had so to happen and was never 'accidental', never unjust, foolish, horrible or 'wrong'; whether the principle of liberty really informed all history; whether his easy optimism and belief in inevitable progress had not been the product of a sheltered mind living in a sheltered age; whether one party to a conflict were not usually more just than the other; whether the philosopher could ever leave politics to the expert, and had not himself an hourly duty to take sides firmly and as a philosopher. Croce welcomed this challenge even if we may think he did not satisfactorily withstand it — he once confessed that the inspiration had been drying up which had sustained the *Critica* through ten years of philosophical and literary battle. His political views had been forming by long meditation on wars and politics in all ages, and now he had to apply them to his own. With no little penetration he foresaw in 1915 that 'we were at the beginning of a long period of wars and profound revolutions, one of those leaps forward which the human race completes through a gigantic clash of forces'.¹ A second article will discuss this next and more political stage in his life.

¹ *La Critica*, Vol. 13, July, 1915: p. 318.

WAS THE FRENCH REVOLUTION A MISTAKE?

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La Révolution est un bloc.—*Clemenceau.*

IN the summer of 1939, official France prepared, if not to celebrate, at least to commemorate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Revolution. To commemorate, not to celebrate, for over France and Europe hung the menace, even more formidable in fact than in fancy, of a new Revolution that denied, peremptorily, the principles of 1789 and threatened the existence of the mother country of those principles. A year before, peace had been bought at a high price and peace had not been delivered. Now war was coming to a reluctant, divided and fearful country and some of the division, of that fear, of that self-distrust came, so many thought, from the great historical fact or force whose birth was to be commemorated. M. Daniel Halévy, acute historian and observer of contemporary history, raised the most relevant question in a tract whose theme was summed up in a phrase of Renan's. 'Un capitaine toujours battu ne saurait être un grand capitaine; un principe qui, dans l'espace de cent ans, épuise une nation, ne saurait être le véritable.'¹ And the implication that France was exhausted, and exhausted by the very doctrines of the Revolution and by the practices that derived from them, was soon made highly plausible by the most catastrophic of French defeats. The hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Fête de la Fédération was celebrated amid the confusions, the fears, hopes and illusions of the birth of the regime of Vichy. And when the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the First Republic came round, the Third had been abolished; its name supplanted by the undoctinal title of *Etat Français*, and Paris, occupied by an army more formidable than that of Brunswick, was the favourite theatre of action for French auxiliaries of a doctrine more systematically hostile to the Revolution than were Burke or Joseph de Maistre. Before catastrophes like these, the comforting appeal to experience, to the spread of revolutionary doctrines and institutions all over the civilised or, rather, the 'progressive' world had lost all force and, if it was remembered at all, it was to provoke bitter mirth or mere bitterness. The days were gone when M. Charles Seignobos could apparently reduce to absurdity the pessimism of Taine by asking why France should be assumed to be going backward because of institutions that caused England and other countries to flourish?

¹ DANIEL HALÉVY, *Histoire d'une Histoire*, p. 51.

The pedantic answer, which could have been made at the time, that Taine did not admit the identity of French and English institutions, that to concentrate on 'parliaments' as the explanation of the growth or decline of nations — was to repeat the revolutionary error, had far less effect than had the appearance of the world in 1942, one hundred and fifty years since the First Republic had defied the coalesced kings. The case of the French Revolution was no longer *chose jugée*.

Of course, it never had been. At no time, from 1790 at latest, had the Revolution been accepted by an overwhelming majority of Frenchmen as a good thing; at most, it had been accepted as something not to be undone, not to be ignored. From the beginning of the religious quarrel at latest, the spirit of the counter-revolution ceased to be confined to a small and discredited group of court parasites and became the sentiment of a large minority of Frenchmen, a minority recruited, from time to time, from fresh groups of alarmed or disgusted or bored citizens. And there has never ceased to be in France, a large minority in passive opposition to the current official doctrine of the Revolution. But despite this permanent opposition, it has always been a minority report. Even if we admit or believe (for it is not a matter subject to strict proof) that there have been times when the *élite* of French society has been counter-revolutionary, there has never been a time when this sentiment was more than a sentiment, never been a time when there was a serious hope or plan of undoing the Revolution which united the greater part of the dissident *élite*. And it may be doubted if, in fact, there has been any time in modern French history when there has been this condemnation of the Revolution by the *élite*; unless by a type of circular argument in the manner of the *Action française*; Frenchmen who are counter-revolutionaries are by definition members of an *élite*, and those who refuse to condemn the Revolution or to regret it, are, by that fact, worthy of condemnation as *mufles*, as *quarante-huitards*, or whatever current term of abuse is in order in *bien pensant* circles. And M. Halévy himself admits this, although he explains it by the natural if disastrous reluctance of the average man to deny his own sentimental attachment to a great legend. 'Il semble que ce qui coûte le plus au cœur de l'homme contemporain, c'est de se rendre à la vérité', so he quotes Montégut in 1871. The heart, alas, has its reasons that the head knows nothing of, but the hostile spectator of this attachment of the French to their Revolution disagrees with Pascal in not thinking this a good thing.

There is, of course, an ambiguity in the term 'Revolution'. There was not, and there is not, agreement as to the limits of the Revolution, or agreement that it has any. Approval of the Revolution or resignation to the Revolution may mean no more than that you think

that the *ancien régime* badly needed reform and that it was incapable of reforming itself. Approval of the Revolution has meant no more, in most cases, than approval or acceptance of what has been done, combined with a genuine feeling of relief that it is over. But since there is no agreement as to when it is over, the apparent unity of sentiment of the majority of Frenchmen has no clear meaning. Men thought or hoped it was over with the acceptance of the constitution by Louis XVI. The Convention, in creating the directorial constitution of the Year III, affirmed in so many words that the Revolution was over. It was the claim of the Consulate that it had completed the Revolution, and the demolition of the *Manège* where the Convention had sat was interpreted as a gesture of conciliation of the victims or defiance of the authors of the Terror. So it went with the Restoration in 1814, with the *Acte Additionel* in 1815; one was to be the renewal of the royal revolution that had proved abortive in 1789, the other the adjustment of the institutions of the Year VIII to the Spirit of the Age. So the Councillor of the Prefecture in *Madame Bovary* congratulated the audience at the *Comices Agricoles* of Yonville that 'le temps n'est plus, messieurs, où la discorde civile ensanglantait nos places publiques'. And a few years later, with the same nervous assurance, the local Republican leaders of Lyons who had found themselves (to their astonishment) thrown into power by the Revolution of February, assured their fellow citizens that 'les principes de liberté et d'égalité que la France a si longtemps poursuivis au travers de tant de luttes et de dangers vont se réaliser enfin pour elle'¹ The Second Empire professed to save the real conquests of the Revolution from its enemies on the Left and the Right, and the royalists of the National Assembly of 1871 refused to restore their king because he insisted on a symbolic renunciation of the Revolution. And the constitution of 1875, with all its monarchist overtones, was at the worst conceived in the spirit of the constitution of 1791 and, with less insistence than usual on its final character, was intended to close the era of revolutions, to consecrate and preserve the valuable conquests of the Revolution. 'The good that men do lives after them, the wicked is now interrèd with their bones' — was the belief — or the hope of the makers of the Third Republic. Indeed, there has been only one fairly open break with the revolutionary tradition in all the variant regimes established in France since 1789, the *État français* of 1940 and the so-called *révolution nationale*. But even if we set aside the incoherence of the policy of Vichy and the purely formal character of most of its constitutional institutions, it is to be noted that Marshal Pétain (on the testimony of a close collaborator) had enough political sense to know that the very word 'revolution' was dangerous.

¹ *Le Journal d'un Bourgeois de Lyon en 1848, publié et annoté par Justin Godart*, p. 23.

'Tout cela n'empêche pas . . . que nous nous servons d'un mot que nous ne connaissons pas, d'un mot "fourre-tout", d'un mot explosif. Il finira par nous entraîner beaucoup plus loin que nous ne le voulons. Laissons-le tomber. J'aimerais beaucoup mieux, pour ma part, les mots de "Redressement national" ou de "Rénovation française"'.¹

If we take seriously the agenda of the first Revolution, as set out by the States General transforming themselves into the National Assembly in order to give France a constitution, we must, unless our faith in the constitution of the Fourth Republic is greater than is that of many of its sponsors, wonder whether a political movement which still has to prove that its primary public objective has been reached, can be described as a success. Four republics; three kinds of kingdom; two, some would say three, empires; plus several *interregna* of which Vichy is only the latest; the record, to a lover of political stability, is not impressive! Romans and Englishmen, alike, think of duration as part of political success; so did the French before 1789, who rejoiced in the age and pre-eminent dignity of the House of France and (with a lack of modern historical learning that should not shock us) saw a continuous descent of power from Clovis, the 'first king of the first race', to Louis XVI. That political stability has not resulted from the Revolution, that the form of the regime is always in question this must be admitted, and if political continuity is to be set as the sole political virtue worth aiming at, the French Revolution *has* been a failure. From the 'forty kings who in a thousand years made France' (to use the Maurrassian formula) to the twelve or so odd regimes that in one hundred and fifty years have undone her, is the historical progression, downwards, to which the critics of the Revolution consistently call our attention.

And they have, as a rule, an explanation of that instability which they equate with a decline. It is because France, to use Taine's metaphor, was a horse which in 1789 threw its rider.² It is because the long and nation-building traditions have been abandoned, because the revolutionaries in each generation have forgotten the Roman wisdom:

Moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque.

It is in this sense that all the critics of the Revolution who stress its instability are, in the strict sense of the term, reactionary. They look back, (with M. Halévy) to a time when the peasant, the craftsman,

¹ H. DU MOULIN DE LABARTHÈTE, *Les Temps des Illusions*, pp. 157-8.

² He has a harsher image. '*Révolution française*. C'est la révolte des ânes et des chevaux contre l'homme. Il est vrai que pendant deux siècles ils avaient été traités comme des ânes et des chevaux.' H. Taine, *Sa Vie et Correspondance*, Vol. III, p. 325.

the small shopkeeper were proud of their 'estate', when a locksmith was more concerned with his skill than with his social rights; they look back to the world of the youth of Proudhon or the youth of Péguy. They would agree with Péguy that, 'le monde moderne s'avilit. C'est sa spécialité. Je dirais c'est son métier, s'il ne fallait point respecter au-dessus de tout ce beau nom de métier'.¹

Some of that bitterness comes from the disillusionment which found its classical expression in Forain's gibe 'que la République était belle sous l'Empire'. The author of this *Histoire d'une Histoire* is also the author of that celebrated 'Cahier de la Quinzaine', *Apologie de Notre Passé*. Proudhon had hungered so much after justice that he felt the bitterness of Hildebrand, not at the coming of the Second Empire, but at the sight of the *lâcheté* of the Second Republic. It is the penalty for seeing your dreams come true, formally. There was, there *is* the Republic. Justice was done (humanly speaking) to Dreyfus; the sovereignty of the sovereign people was recognized. Shelley foresaw the danger to the spirit of the revolutionary when he congratulated Keats on his early death:

From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure;

and when he asked the terrible final question in the choric song of Hellas:

O drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy . . .

And there is, too, in the long series of intellectual criticisms of the revolutionary legend, a good deal of the irritation that the intellectual (especially the French intellectual) feels at the sight of the mere vulgarisation of an idea that, to preserve its truth, needs to be delicately nourished. There is a human reluctance to admit, with Renan that 'M. Homais avait raison'. And the creator of M. Homais gave a good example of the natural reaction of the intellectual when he finally broke the news, as tactfully as possible, that while he was willing to admire Victor Hugo's poetry and was willing to act as his letter-box, to evade the imperial censors, he thought the poet's politics high-flown nonsense. And, long after Flaubert, the tradition of laughing at the official republican tradition has lived on — with plenty of official nonsense to nourish it.

If the Revolution has long been under fire from the Right or from the disillusioned Left, it has also been under fire, in its official version, from the still hopeful Left. How often had 'the People' or, later, 'the Workers' welcomed the Republic:

¹ *Œuvres choisies*, p. 214.

Pâle encore, et des plis de sa blanche tunique
Cachant son front voilé?

And how often had they discovered that it made little difference to them; that the first, second, third and fourth republics had in common an apparently limitless talent for being deceived? For this school, the Republic is still to come; 'que la République sera belle'. The Revolution is still going on; Marx was right in 1850, looking back to '93 — and forward to 194? 'Le cri de guerre fut enfin lancé, qui, en '93, ne pouvait pas encore être lancé, mais qui retrospectivement, projette sur '93 un flot de lumière: La révolution en permanence!'¹

For this school the Revolution is still going on, and the first act of the Revolution is only now intelligible in the light of Marxian historiography.

The Protean character of the Revolution is made abundantly manifest by the history of doctrine, of the successive official orthodox versions of revolutionary history. And that history is not only enlightening, it is amusing. For there is an historical application of the old Radical doctrine: 'pas d'ennemis à gauche'. When Lamartine launched the cult of the Girondins, he opened a flood-gate indeed! As Sainte-Beuve wrote: 'Je ne dirai pas que cet ouvrage des Girondins émeut, mais il émotionne: mauvais mot, mauvaise chose.'²

But the rehabilitation of the Girondins was soon followed by the canonisation of Danton, the special hero of Aulard, the officially appointed — and paid — refuter of Taine. Taine's ghost might have smiled at the assault delivered on Aulard and his hero by Mathiez — and now M. Guérin sees, in the canonisation of Robespierre, the most ingenious bourgeois attempt to hide from the French workers, the real *grands ancêtres* of the modern working-class movement, *les enragés* betrayed by Robespierre — and by Mathiez. M. Guérin is too good a Marxian to profess to believe that his heroes and martyrs were adequate for the task and the times and he would hardly deny the justice of the verdict of M. Georges Lefebvre (apologia as it is for mediocre politicians whom no one has ever tried to canonise): 'les Thermidoriens ont renoué avec la tradition léguée par l'Assemblée constituante qui condamnait à la fois l'Ancien régime et la démocratie pour assurer la prédominance de la bourgeoisie dont l'avènement, préparé par toute l'histoire de la France et

¹ Daniel Guérin, *La Lutte des Classes sous la Première République*, Vol. II p. 385.

² *Causeries du Lundi*, Vol. IV, p. 392. Sainte-Beuve goes on to note that Lamartine had compared Camille Desmoulins to Fénelon. 'Étonnez-vous après cela d'une erreur de tact et d'un hasard de touche' (*ibid.*). Macaulay, it should be noted, had a weakness for the Girondins as Carlyle had for the Jacobins, but neither opinion counted for much in France.

légitimé par la capacité, pouvait seul, à ses yeux, assurer la prospérité de la communauté nationale.¹

But we may be sure that a new orthodoxy of the Left is in process of creation and that for the new historiography of the Left the Revolution is still on the move — and its history is still to be rewritten. For, as M. Guérin cites it in his series of mottoes, the *Egaux* of 1796 were right. 'La Révolution française n'est que l'avant-courrière d'une autre révolution bien plus grande, bien plus solennelle et *qui sera la dernière*'.² And if for millions of Frenchmen the question of the Revolution is now solved, if a defined object is aimed at beyond which no change or progress is conceivable, it is because for millions of Frenchmen, the Russian Revolution has swallowed up the Revolution, and the pattern laid up in heaven has been brought to earth in Moscow. The new *Ligueurs* of the communist party are as indifferent to national pride as their predecessors, as the leaders of the people of Paris. And if the old quarrels over the meaning of the Revolution have largely ceased, it is because, at last, the French Revolution has been merged in a later and possibly greater revolution.³ So from Right and Left the critics close in; the Revolution was a disaster or it was a mere first act, or it was an enterprise once full of hope that was betrayed. But in any case the *pays légal* that came from the Revolution was far inferior to the *pays réel* that existed in the minds of the two schools of critics, whose only common ground was hatred for, or contempt for, the 'Revolution' to which, alas, the great majority of Frenchmen gave, and give, their adherence.

What had these critics in common, and what was the justice of their complaint? Of course, their grounds of criticism differed deeply, the Right (and the disillusioned Left) complaining that the Revolution did not stop, the optimistic Left complaining that it had been repeatedly blocked or derailed. But they have *one* thing in common; both stress the anomalous position of the French bourgeoisie or, to put it more exactly, the French possessing classes. For the grievance of the Right has been that the French people have firmly refused, once they got the chance to make a choice, to trust their political destiny to the possessing classes. If in brief moments of disillusionment they have turned to the conservative forces, in 1849 and in 1871 and again in 1940, they have quickly recovered from their panic and, resenting their momentary abdication, have denied, with more or less plausibility, that they had ever given any mandate

¹ LEFEBVRE, *Les Thermidoriens*, p. 198.

² Italics mine.

³ An odd example was recently furnished by *L'Humanité*, in which one of its chief contributors wrote, as if it was beyond dispute, that the most astonishing example of the defence of the Revolution against overwhelming odds was furnished by modern Russia. Stalingrad had so completely replaced Valmy that no apology was needed.

to the *gens bien*. On the other side, the French people, up to now, have been very tender indeed of the substantial economic power and privileges of this class; the two million families have, hitherto, always come to the rescue of the two hundred. The 'two hundred families', or the 'two thousand', or whatever numerical fiction you choose, have been excluded, since 1851, from political power—on their terms at any rate—and have remained in fact important political forces all the same. Just as the Shogunate and the feudal chiefs could not keep the great business dynasties in the place Japanese moral principles assigned to them, once a money economy was allowed to produce its normal results, so the French possessing classes could not help having political power; what it was denied was the open political recognition of that power.

This exclusion of the rich from the governing class (to call it the 'ruling class' exclusively would be misleading) had unfortunate results, and one of them was the degree to which the rich resented the power of a state in which they did not play their normal role. And the converse of that state of affairs was the excessive proportion of the French political personnel who were purely *arrivistes*, and the constant scandal given by the career of the agitator finishing in the bosom of the Right, the career of which the classic example was given by the life and death of Pierre Laval.

There are many reasons for this exclusion of the Right. It was partly bad luck; for example, the bad luck of the birth of 'l'enfant du miracle', the Comte de Chambord, as disastrous to those interests attached to the restored Bourbons as was the birth of the Prince of Wales to the devotees of divine right in 1688. There was, if you like, the bad luck of the incompetence of Louis XVI, who, had he been a different man, with a different education and a different governmental personnel, might have carried through his own *Meiji* restoration — to fall back on the Japanese parallel. There was, too (so Taine thought), the bad luck of the excessive competence of Bonaparte. For if, as Burke and Joseph de Maistre and Mallet du Pan and others had foreseen, the convulsions of the Revolution would end in a military *coup d'état*, it was not necessary that they should have ended in rule by a Napoleon. A Pichegru, a Joubert, a Moreau, still better a Bernadotte, would have sufficed either to play the Monk or the Cromwell (after the Cromwell there would still have been room for the Monk). There was bad luck, too, in the fact that Bonaparte married Josephine, not one of the Clary girls, who might have provided a consort and an heir for the Emperor of the French, as one of them did for the King of Sweden. And even if the rest of the *épopée* had been similar, it would have mattered a lot if the heir to the throne in 1814 had been a young man and not an infant. For, as far as such speculation has any validity, the nearest approach to a

marriage of the Revolution with the old regime and a resultant stable political system was that offered by the First Empire (the chief enemy to the stability was the Emperor). As Tocqueville pointed out to the Comte de Chambord in 1853,¹ the Bonapartist system was 'révolutionnaire dans son origine et ses traditions, de telle façon qu'il n'alarme aucun des grands intérêts que la Révolution a créés; il ne fait craindre ni le retour de l'ancien régime, ni la prépondérance des nobles, ni la domination du clergé; il satisfait, en un mot, à tous les instincts nouveaux, sauf celui de la liberté'.² And if this was true of the Second Empire, how much more true of the First! But *Dis aliter visum*.

The French possessing classes were left to manage the legitimisation of the Revolution with only their own powers of personal appeal and their own stores of political wisdom to aid them. These were insufficient. There are more reasons than one for this failure, but one is decisive. The possessing classes were in great part *new* possessors. They had done well out of the Revolution and they clung, with a tenacity based on fear, to their new possessions. They had had, or thought they had had, a narrow escape. 'Les montagnards, sortis de son sein, s'étaient mis à la tête des sans-culottes: elle avait eu peur et n'en perdit pas mémoire. C'est pourquoi, son attention se concentrant désormais sur sa propre défense, son esprit s'assombrit et se durcit; sa méfiance et son dédain du peuple se ravivèrent et il s'y adjoignit une rancune, parfois haineuse; il n'y avait guère qu'un pas à faire pour transformer la bourgeoisie en une nouvelle aristocratie qui travaillerait sans scrupule à se réserver tous les profits de la Révolution.'³ *Tous les profits de la Révolution!* It is this *accaparement* of the Revolution that the town workers have never forgiven, and which has made the peasantry (part sharers in the profits) regard their 'natural' chiefs with distrust and irony. It is this ambiguity in their position that made the *bourgeoisie* so nervous and so obstinate. It is possible that, had we more evidence, newspapers, pamphlets, parliamentary debates, we should find that a good many people in England in the late sixteenth century regarded the pretensions of the Russells and the Cecils in much the light in which Proudhon saw the profiteers of the Republic and Empire. But the fortunes of the new men of the Reformation were built up on the confiscation of corporate property; with the death of the last representatives of the old corporate owners, the position of the new men was morally established. But in France, in addition to the confiscation of church lands, there were great transfers of private lands, too. And the original owners were

¹ Or in 1852; the date matters little.

² REDIER, *Comme Disait M. de Tocqueville*, p. 245.

³ Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

alive in their own persons or in the persons of their natural heirs. In vain did the Constitution of 1791 assert that property was a natural right. Whose property, and in what? In vain the *milliard* was paid to the émigrés and all right-thinking people shuddered at the idea of an 'agrarian law'. Proudhon asked 'What is property?' and, not staying for an answer, replied himself: 'Property is theft.' In the debate which followed, it is not hard to see, in the anger and embarrassments of the defenders of the established order, the uneasy consciousness that what had been done by the National Assembly and the Convention might be done again—for other beneficiaries. Balzac called one of his most remarkable novels that treats of these rival claims, *Une Ténébreuse Affaire*. It was indeed, and natural was the resentment directed against those who insisted on dragging it into the light!

And it was not only the heirs of the *sans-culottes* who looked with irony on the pretensions of the new men; there were the old owners, only partly compensated and taking out in social superiority the cost of their lost possessions. If we throw in, too, the bitter divisions between the catholic and Voltairean elements of the possessing classes, we can account easily enough for its weakness.

But how are we to account for the folly? For folly, a complete lack of 'le tact des choses possibles', is the main note of the political activities of the French aristocracies, old and new, all through the nineteenth century and later. A few of the more intelligent leaders of the possessing classes had enough self-control to judge the realities. Tocqueville warned his complacent colleagues, on the eve of 1848, of the danger that must be incurred in a country which had abolished all privilege—except the privilege of property. It was a feeble thing to stand alone—or so he thought.¹

¹ Tocqueville saw more in the June days than Thiers or Cavaignac. 'On a beaucoup dit, on répète encore, que les insurgés de juin étaient le rebut de l'humanité; qu'on ne voyait parmi eux que des vauriens de toutes sortes, et qu'ils n'agissaient que pour la passion grossière du pillage. Il y avait beaucoup de ces gens—là parmi eux assurément; mais il n'est pas vrai qu'il n'y eût que de ceux-là. Plût à Dieu qu'il en eût été ainsi! Des hommes de cette nature ne sont jamais que de petites minorités; il ne prevaient jamais. La prison et l'échafaud nous en débarrassent; tout est dit. Il y eut dans l'insurrection de juin autre chose que de mauvais penchants; il y eut de fausses idées. Beaucoup de ces hommes, qui marchaient au renversement des droits les plus sacrés, étaient conduits par une sorte de notion erronée du droit. Ils croyaient sincèrement que la société était fondée sur l'injustice, et ils voulaient lui donner une autre base. C'est cette sorte de religion révolutionnaire que nos baïonnettes et nos canons ne détruiront pas' (Redier, *op. cit.*, p. 258-9). As if to show that the French conservatives do not deserve to have had a Tocqueville, the nearest approach to a Burke vouchsafed to France, M. Redier goes on to reprove Tocqueville for his blindness. 'Il a rencontré un jour le fameux ouvrage de l'Abbé Barruel, les *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme*. Il la'a vite écarté, ne pouvant admettre que la franc-maçonnerie eût machiné un complot ou il voyait vraiment,

But there is another and rather neglected explanation of the permanent tension in French society, of the permanent quarrel about the Revolution. M. Halévy, with his customary penetration, suggests it. The French Revolution was only one, perhaps not the most important, of the Revolutions that made the modern world. Another at least equally important revolution was going on in England — and not going on in France. If we take our eyes away from the noise, drama, declamation of Paris, from the barricades and the guillotine, from 1830 and 1848, if we look at the 'infra-structure' of modern society, we shall be tempted to think that the great revolution took place in England, and that there is more to learn from the rapid but not formally revolutionary changes in the English polity than from the 'convulsions of Paris'. It is not accidental that Marx wrote pamphlets on France and his massive work in and, in effect, on England. But because we have concentrated on France we have not even understood France. M. Guérin admits how ambiguous is the term 'proletariat' applied to the Paris workers of the First Republic. But a real proletariat was beginning to be visible in England. Chartism is at least as interesting as the revolts at Lyons or the massacre of the Rue Transnonain. And if we refuse to accept the view that the great changes in European society which altered the relative position of France, can be explained in purely French terms, we can understand French history all the better. Because the French Revolution came before the creation of a real proletariat and a real modern industry in France, it was limited in its effects. The Revolution did, in fact, produce social stability if not political stability; looked at coldly, France changed less between 1789 and 1914 than did England or Germany, and the French Revolution did 'solve' the problems of the rural and petit bourgeois economy of the France of 1789.

We have evidence of that in the firmness with which the peasantry of France has refused to contemplate, for a moment, the return of the good old days, in the speed with which even in La Vendée the old royalist faith died. And the peasantry and the *bien pensant* bourgeoisie of the little towns, and a good many of the craftsmen of the little towns, remained Bonapartists because the Empire was the end of the

quant à lui, le doigt de Dieu. Il ne veut pas non plus accepter l'hypothèse que l'abaissement de la France par la Révolution ait pu être tramé à l'étranger, notamment en Angleterre, par des rivaux intéressés à nous abattre. Lui si positif, si soucieux des faits, ne veut pas de ces faits-là. La Révolution, il va essayer de la comprendre, mais par une méthode qui est à la fois excellente et suspecte' (*op. cit.*, p. 260-1). Joseph de Maistre would have been as startled as Tocqueville to see the Revolution reduced in scale in this fashion and perhaps as indignant at the insult to the French monarchy, in the implication that it could be so easily overthrown by English jealousy and the intrigues of secret societies. How much in modern French history M. Redier unconsciously explains!

Revolution *they* had in mind and gave them adequate economic and emotional satisfaction. They did not want the return of the old order or of the Jacobins, of the *taille* or the law of the maximum.

It was different in the great towns; among the rich and the poor, the Revolution had not solved all problems by any means. The rich had their wounded pride, the city poor more substantial grievances to embitter them and keep alive, in each generation, the question of the Revolution. And with the growth in each generation of a real proletariat, problems that were only formally urgent in 1793 became more and more urgent — and the internal stability of French society made it possible to postpone them. So we have the great missing careers of French history. Where is the French Peel or the French Gladstone, the French Fabian Society or the French Tory Democracy? Where is the equivalent of the Bismarckian social service state or the Italian co-operative movement?

'The Revolution is a bloc,' said Clemenceau in 1897. You must swallow all of it; the men Robespierre executed, the men who executed Robespierre, Robespierre himself. And that bloc until very modern times was granite indeed. Intelligence, even genius, passion, hate, Guesde, Maurras, Taine, Barres, all in different ways protested against the society that the Revolution had created; each dreamed (for it was no more than a dream) of a different France, in which this great national experience and *solution* had not taken place. But there it stood and there it stands. Nothing is more striking in the history of Vichy than the sterility of its attempted reconstruction, not merely the sterility imposed on it by the dominating power of the Germans, but by the 'folklorist' character of the ideas of the reconstruction of France that flitted through the minds of the most honest and patriotic colleagues of the Marshal. The way back is barred. And the infatuation of various elements of French society with fascism and nazism has to be paid for now, when it is made evident that a contempt for the principles of '89 does not save a nation from disasters more terrible than any that have befallen France.

But the other problem remains. The Revolution was a solution of a problem that France would have been happier to have solved in other ways. But it was a problem to be solved. Think even of the limited impact of the industrial revolution on a France of the *ancien régime*, with its jumble of laws and customs, its privileges and its servitudes! That the solution had to be revolutionary was disastrous, because such a solution is always disastrous, that is to say it exacts a price that may bankrupt the society that pays it. But this applies to other revolutions, too, revolutions based on very different doctrines. But what has the Revolution to contribute to the problems of contemporary France, when with more and more urgency

new problems to which it gives only rhetorical answers are being pressed on French attention? Not very much, certainly not a blanket endorsement of the panaceas of the heirs of the *enragés* of 1794! Over a large sector of French society, the Revolution has little relevance except as suggesting a method. And that suggestion is perhaps the most dangerous legacy of the revolutionary legend, the legend of violence and vigour, of drastic measures, of the war on the enemies of the people. For the Revolution *is* a bloc. If you take that road, at the end is a destiny that you cannot foresee, but which will be unlike, terribly unlike, what you anticipated. The modernisation of French society, the adjustment of the relations of the disinherited of the Revolution (the industrial workers) and the heirs, the peasants and the bourgeoisie, is the most important *agendum* of French society. And the Revolution will have proved a great (if unavoidable) mistake if it imposes, by its legendary power, a new revolutionary solution.

DISCOVERY IN MEDIEVAL SCIENCE AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

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ABOUT fifty years after the Norman Conquest, Adelard of Bath published an imaginary conversation with his nephew which, if something which developed so gradually can be said to have had a definite beginning, may well be taken as the origin of the scientific attitude in the modern world. As a youth and a young man Adelard had studied and taught at the cathedral schools of Tours and Laon, and it was probably during this period of his life that he wrote treatises on the abacus and on falconry which rely on purely Latin sources. Up to that time the West had derived its conception of nature from the popular compendia of writers such as Pliny, Boethius and Isidore of Seville. After leaving Laon, Adelard may be traced in southern Italy and the Near East and became quite an important figure in the early part of the movement of translation from Arabic and Greek into Latin which brought back to the West the philosophy and physics of Aristotle and nearly all the other important Greek works of mathematical, astronomical, biological, medical and other science. Adelard himself made the first Latin translation of Euclid from an Arabic text, and he was one of the first to introduce Hindu numerals, the astrolabe and some knowledge of Moslem music.

It was on his return to England from one of his periods abroad that Adelard held his conversation with his perhaps fictitious nephew. The latter is represented as having been taught by his uncle at Laon and having been left there to go on 'with the foolishness of Gallic opinions' while Adelard went to study with the Arabs. After their first greetings, as they have most of the day before them, they settle down to a discussion on natural questions ranging from the vacuum to the transmission of light and sound, and from the growth of plants to the nephew's tears of welcoming joy which his uncle attributes to moisture distilled from an overheated brain. In the course of this the nephew asks a question to which Adelard's answer is the foundation of natural science.

NEPHEW Why do plants grow from earth? . . . If you collect dry dust and keep it finely powdered in a brass or earthenware pot, after a while you will find plants springing up. To what

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else can you attribute this but to the marvellous effect of the wonderful divine will?

ADELARD It certainly is the Creator's will that plants grow from the earth, but it is not without a natural reason too . . . And again to a later remark of his nephew that 'you are unable to produce reasons and it is better to attribute all the operations of the universe to God,' Adelard replies: I do not detract from God. Everything is from him and in him. But (nature) is not confused and without system, and as far as human science has progressed it should be given a hearing. Only when it fails utterly should there be recourse to God.

Before the twelfth and thirteenth centuries nature, as an object of educated reflection, was nothing more than a symbol of something else in the moral or spiritual order. The moon was a symbol of the church because it reflects the divine light. The phoenix, which Albertus Magnus later ejected from zoology, was the symbol of the resurrection. The only other interest nature had was practical, and treatises on medicine and chemical processes such as dyeing and painting went on being written or edited from the end of the Roman Empire. What Adelard of Bath and western Europe generally learnt from the translations from Arabic and Greek was to consider the operations of nature as having an interest in themselves apart from the moral or spiritual instruction they may afford, and as being the product of natural and intelligible causes amenable to human investigation. It was Aristotle's works which provided the most complete expression of this rational philosophy of nature, and as they also contained a complete system of physics and metaphysics explaining everything from first matter to God, it was natural that they should have come into conflict with an equally omniscient theology. The problem of the relations of faith and reason which was thus raised, continued to excite public interest until at least the end of the nineteenth century and remains a source of minor controversy even now. But whatever their views on this, the Latins were now committed to explanations by natural causes which alone could satisfy, in Duhem's phrase, 'man's strong desire to understand the universe'.

A complete system of such natural explanations was provided more or less out of the blue by Aristotle and other Greeks such as Ptolemy and Galen, and all that had to be done by natural philosophers was to assimilate this gratuitous illumination of mind and apply it to phenomena. In this they may perhaps be compared to the Japanese when they took up Western science in the nineteenth century, and as the Japanese passed from passive imitation to original research, so did the Latins. The differences between the

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ancient authorities, such as those between Aristotle and Ptolemy over astronomy and between Aristotle and Galen over anatomy and physiology, and the criticism which had been carried on by both Greeks and Arabs, encouraged a critical spirit among the Latins themselves which their own philosophical traditions made them ready to indulge. Furthermore, the explanations offered sent them to the phenomena explained. Here they had ready to hand the observational practices of the useful arts, and their investigations were often carried out for practical reasons, as astronomy was studied for the improvement of the calendar, or with a practical result, as the study of optics issued in the invention of spectacles at the end of the thirteenth century. But observation no less than logical criticism was also used to accommodate the explanation to the phenomena and sometimes led to considerable modifications in theory. The European science which lies between two intellectual revolutions, the Aristotelian Revolution of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the so-called Scientific Revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth, is thus based on the consideration, in terms of reason and experience, of the facts and theories contained in the works of Greek science and their Arab commentators, which in turn led to original European research. The observations of natural philosophers on heavenly bodies, magnets, lenses, disease and its surgical or medical treatment, or the structure and habits of animals and plants then encouraged the empirical habit of mind thinking within a rational framework and a definite, if slow, progress of discovery.

This may be illustrated in more detail from diverse aspects of science. There were two main astronomical systems in the thirteenth century, Aristotle's system of solid spheres concentric with the centre of the earth and Ptolemy's eccentrics and epicycles, according to which the centre of the circle in which a planet moves is itself made to describe a circle about another point which is not necessarily the centre of the earth. It was held that something like Aristotle's spheres was a description of 'real' physical fact, while Ptolemy's system was simply a geometrical device for describing the observed movements of the planets. In this the latter was much the superior, and also accounted for phenomena such as the variation in brightness of the planets and the fact that solar eclipses are sometimes annular and sometimes total, which can be explained only by assuming that the distance of a given body from the centre of the earth is not constant. Reflecting on these facts, which were known to the Greeks, thirteenth-century practical astronomers and natural philosophers arrived at a conclusion which is clearly expressed by St. Thomas Aquinas.

For anything, a system (*ratio*) may be induced in a double

fashion. One way is for the proving of some principle (*radix*), just as in natural science there is brought sufficient reason for proving that the motions of the heavens are always of uniform velocity. In the other way reasons are adduced which do not sufficiently prove the principle, but which may show that the effects that follow agree with that principle. As in astronomy a system of eccentrics and epicycles is posited, because this assumption enables the sensible phenomena of the celestial motions to be accounted for: yet the system is not a sufficient proof, because possibly another hypothesis might also be able to account for them.

Observations with simple instruments such as the astrolabe and the surveyors 'Jacob's staff', and the development of trigonometry by such men as Richard of Wallingford of the fourteenth-century, Merton school of astronomy and the fifteenth-century German, Regiomontanus, extended the empirical range and accuracy of the subject. Others, such as the perspicacious fourteenth bishop of Lisieux, Nicholas Oresme, proposed radical modifications in astronomical theory. Oresme suggested that the phenomena could be equally well 'saved' by supposing the heavens to be at rest and the earth to revolve, and gave reasons why this rather than the opposite was more likely to be the 'real' situation. But he did not work out his hypothesis in geometrical detail and while his contemporaries were not unaware of the defects of the Ptolemaic system it was not likely to be abandoned except for an equally well-developed alternative. The first of these was that of Copernicus, whose work is a direct development of that of his predecessors. As the consequences of this were unfolded, it came at last to be realised that in natural science the distinction between what is 'real' and a hypothesis which merely 'saves the phenomena' may be maintained only in a Pickwickian sense.

A similar development of classical theories by logic and observation took place in physics. This led in the thirteenth century to such discoveries as the principle of the statical moment and its application to the inclined plane by Jordanus Nemorarius and his school, to the improved understanding of the refraction of light and of lenses by Witelo, John Peckham and Roger Bacon, and to the experiments of Peter Peregrine of Maricourt which were admired by William Gilbert and anticipated much of his work on magnetism. Peter Peregrine's little *Epistola de Magnete*, which was completed on August 8th, 1269 as he lay in Charles of Anjou's besieging army below the walls of Lucera in southern Italy, begins with the following injunction:

You must realise, my dear friend, that while anyone who works in this field must know the nature of things and not be

ignorant of the celestial motions, he must also make ready use of his own hands because this will itself discover remarkable effects. Even a modest industry will enable him to correct errors which natural philosophy and mathematics alone, without hands, would never do in eternity. For in investigating the unknown we greatly need manual industry, without which we can accomplish nothing.

Similar remarks may be found elsewhere in treatises on chemistry, medicine, surgery, botany or zoology, and in the best of them the deed was as good as the word. 'Remarkable effects' were discovered by Albertus Magnus, whose researches were directly inspired by the Aristotelian texts and were reported as expansions of them. In his *De Animalibus* not only does Albert give excellent descriptions of many northern animals and develop Aristotle's system of classification, but he noted ecological points such as the colour varieties of the squirrel, falcon and raven, recognised the morphological correspondence of the bones of the fore limb of the horse and dog, discovered by dissection the brain and ventral nerve cord of the crab and experimented on the regeneration of crabs' limbs. He also discovered the true egg of insects, which Aristotle had taken to be the pupa, and made the remark: *generatio omnium animalium primo est ex ovis*. His account of the life history of the butterfly is a remarkable example of sustained observation.

After the sun has begun to recede from the summer tropic certain caterpillars hide themselves in cracks, putrefy internally and become surrounded by a hard, horny, annular skin. In this is born a flying worm (*vermis volans*) which has in front a long coiled tongue which it thrusts into flowers and sucks out the nectar. It develops four wings, two in front and two behind, and flies and is many coloured and has many legs, but not as many as it had when it was a caterpillar. The colours vary in two ways, either according to genus or in one individual. Some genera are white, some black and some of intermediate colours and in the latter many different colours are found in the same individual. This winged animal developing from a caterpillar is usually called *verviscella* by the Latins. It flies at the end of autumn and emits eggs, for the whole lower part of its body below the thorax is converted in eggs, and after that it dies. Caterpillars hatch from these eggs next spring. But certain grubs do not become *verviscellae* but gather at the ends of the branches of trees and there make nests and lay eggs, and from these arise grubs in the following spring. The nests of this sort are always pointed towards the sun at midday. But the sort

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which are generated from the flying forms place all their eggs in walls and cracks in wood and walls of houses near gardens.

During the fourteenth century the same logical and observational criticism of the texts of Greek, Arabic and Latin writers resulted in the *impetus* dynamics which was used by John Buridan and Albert of Saxony to unite both terrestrial and celestial phenomena in one system of mechanics. At the same time the attempt to represent qualitative differences in terms of quantity by the 'latitude of forms', and the idea of expressing change as continuous moving quantity instead of as a succession of discrete states, laid the logical foundations of mathematical physics. During his geometrical development of these ideas, Oresme not only discovered what is the essence of the kinematics of freely falling bodies, that the space traversed in a given time by a body moving with uniformly accelerated velocity is equal to the product of the total time of moving into the mean of the initial and final velocities, but invented analytical geometry. The increasing interest in measurement during the fifteenth century is shown by Nicholas of Cues' treatise on the balance, Giovanni Marliani's experiments with balls rolling down inclined planes and with pendulums, and the work of Regiomontanus in astronomy.

But in comparison, for instance, with that of the seventeenth century, fifteenth-century science suffered from two serious defects. The first was the severe limitation of mathematical technique, which was gradually removed from the end of the century by the translation of the works of previously unknown Greek mathematicians such as Archimedes. But even more serious was the absence of a clearly understood and systematically practised experimental method. While such men as Peter Peregrine had made effective and intelligent use of experiment in particular problems, the scholastic logic of science, like Aristotle's from which it was derived, at first included no inductive method whereby sense data may be collected and generalised to express the precise relation between events as cause and effect. The absence of such a method is reflected in the often uncritical acceptance of data and haphazard use of experience in testing a hypothesis. This was remedied by the commentaries on Aristotle and Galen made from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century by logicians such as Peter of Spain, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham and the medical philosophers of the University of Padua.

Aristotle's logic was primarily concerned with deduction from propositions apprehended by intuition. Many logicians now hold that a greater part of science than was supposed by Francis Bacon or Mill is concerned not with induction but with the deduction of consequences from accepted theories. Recourse is had to experience to verify these consequences and the theory is thus tested and modi-

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fied according to its predictive success. But the logic of modern science is not, like Aristotle's, simply a logic of proof. The method of controlled experiment serves two functions which he poorly supplied. The framing of causal generalisations from which events may be deduced and thus 'explained' requires the critical collecting of observations relating one event to another; and where it cannot be immediately seen as it can in mathematics, that a proposition must be universally true, but proof depends on the facts of experience, there is no other way of establishing it than by showing that facts disprove its rivals. This is what Francis Bacon called the method of exclusion, but in fact it is clearly expressed by William of Ockham.

The scientific method of the scotists and ockhamists of Oxford, Paris and Padua began with the 'resolution' of an effect into its possible causes and the repetition of observations until the data suggested a hypothesis. The next stage was 'composition', the deduction of consequences from this hypothesis, which were then tested by further experience and at the same time rival hypotheses eliminated. The effects so deduced are then 'explained' by the hypothesis in which they are incorporated. Some writers even went so far as to say that since such hypotheses rest simply on the facts which they serve to explain, therefore all science is merely conjectural or hypothetical. But this was not generally accepted, and until the end of the seventeenth century 'natural philosophers' continued to be inspired by the faith that they were discovering in the particular instance the intelligible structure of the real world.

J. H. Randall has pointed out that apart from the careful and precise mathematical analysis of experience which he learnt from Archimedes, the logical basis of Galileo's scientific method is entirely derived from his ockhamist Paduan predecessors, whose technical terms he uses. Galileo seems to have been the first to put this method systematically into practice. The internal revolution in science of which he was the chief instrument was characterised by such a use of experiment and the expression of the causal relations so established in terms of mathematics. The result was the geometrisation of physics and all its consequences. As the intellectual revolution with which medieval science began established the view of the world as an ordered structure of natural causes amenable to human investigation, the analysis of the empirical identification and quantitative representation of those causes in particular effects thus prepared the ground for the revolution with which it passed into the science of modern times.

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This work by the Professor of English Literature in the University of Sydney is an attempt to analyse the accumulated results of the contemporary criticism of Milton's great poem. Small though the study is, Mr. Waldock manages to include the core of most of the important writings on the subject since the beginning of this century. There are indeed many who agree with Mr. Hugh Sykes Davies that there has been a steady and gradual decline in the quality of Miltonic criticism over its whole period, and this thesis the author scarcely disputes. Those who cherish their Milton will (with Professor Willey and Mr. Davies) ascribe the existence even of the controversy to the fateful decline of classical education in the Western world. The classical critics 'liked Milton for the reasons which were important to Milton', and Messrs. Lewis, Tillyard, Saurat, Sewell and Green have found it difficult to produce better reasons for appreciating *Paradise Lost*. The question as to what Milton really meant is one, as the author immediately indicates, which would have aroused no small surprise in Johnson, Coleridge and Arnold. A generation, of course, which is cynical of professed motives and suspects the presence of others, either concealed or not realised by authors, poets, musicians as well as statesmen, has indulged in more discussion of the subject than in all the rest of the time during which *Paradise Lost* has been in print, and we have good reason to thank Mr. Waldock for clearing away some of the brushwood. The chief contenders in this Miltonic strife are — as portrayed by Mr. Waldock — Mr. Lewis and Professor Tillyard. Mr. Saurat is invoked only (rightly, one thinks) to be dismissed, and the scales are evenly weighed. One may regret that this form of criticism has come so much to the forefront in our literary schools of today, but no student of English can afford to ignore it, and for that reason Mr. Waldock has done a useful service.

In conclusion, the author cites Mr. Lewis's application of the phrase *materia appetitur formam ut virum femina*. It may be suggested that he himself could apply the text without undue difficulty to his style, which although always lucid, is, on occasions, somewhat pedestrian, and on others naive.



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Small issues arise. The author is incorrect (in spite of his reliance on H. A. L. Fisher!) in asserting that 'the Pan-German League, founded in 1893, proposed that Austria, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands should be incorporated into the Reich (p. 92); the analysis of the causes for the failure of the League of Nations are conventional, banal and wholly incomplete (pp. 129-38); and the description of European racial unity, while interesting, is without great bearing on the concrete questions of European Unity. The author writes with fluency, and has admirably succeeded in most of the aims defined in the preface.

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